



HIRSCHL & ADLER MODERN

For Immediate Release

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Randall Exon
Maritime

September 14 – October 14, 2022

Hirschl & Adler Modern is thrilled to open its Fall 2022 season with *Maritime*, Randall Exon's fifth solo exhibition with the gallery and his first since 2013. Twelve new paintings of quotidian moments are imbued with the artist's celebrated sense of haunting beauty. Each one feeling all the more poignant against the backdrop of recent events. Focusing on the sea, and boats more specifically, this body of work was born out of Exon's experiences during Covid lockdown. Needing to simply "get out of the house," the artist began exploring the back roads of Delaware Bay in southern New Jersey, across the state line from his home outside Philadelphia. It was there that Exon found a working-class yacht club that had fallen on hard times, with dozens of old yachts out of the water, propped up on poles and jacks. Initially drawn-in by the architecture of the boats with their colorful keels fading in the sun, Exon was captivated by the timelessness of the scene. The artist would return again and again to paint what he found there, keenly understanding the allegory he was depicting. Through Exon's masterful handling, the sense of isolation and of being outside of time, shared by many during the pandemic, is channeled into moments of wonder and peace.

Exon's *Rudder Series*, five small scale portraits of the rudders of abandoned boats, are moving examples of the artist's intentions. Each painting's complex compositional arrangement is punctuated by moments of bright color and whimsy, with each rudder personifying our own need for purpose in an uncertain time. Paintings like *Long Keel* and *Evinrude* continue this narrative. In both, a single boat stands defiant in its surrounding. Exon has pulled back from the close-cropping of the *Rudder Series* to expose an expanse of horizon. This broader vantage deepens the sense of isolation, as well as emphasizes the boat's resolve.

Two large scale paintings introduce human figures to the exhibition's scope. *The Chesapeake* portrays a family group in a grassy spit of land by a beach, seated around a fire. Each member, including the dog, stare off into different points in the distance. A figure, whose back is to us, stands on a trampoline, adding a touch of surrealism to the scene. Despite their proximity to each other, these figures are alone in their world. Exon approaches this same idea of isolation from a different angle in *The Jetty*, a bright, open painting of two surfers standing on the shore. A male figure in wetsuit stares out past a small grouping of rocks, to watch the breaking waves. Next to him and central to the scene, a female figure looks straight at the viewer. Her acknowledgement

of our presence on the beach feels warm and welcoming. After months, years even, of feeling isolated – of feeling like time does not exist – we are greeted with the stranger’s reassurance of being in the here and now.

Randall Exon was born in Vermillion, South Dakota, in 1956. He earned his B.F.A. in painting from Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas, and an M.F.A. at the University of Iowa. In 2003, the James A. Michener Art Museum in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, staged a solo exhibition of his work. He was awarded the Thomas Benedict Clarke Prize in the 179th Annual Invitation Exhibition of Contemporary American Art at the National Academy Museum and School of Fine Arts, New York in 2004. Exon’s work was featured in *Visions of the Susquehanna*, a traveling exhibition organized by the Lancaster Museum of Art, Pennsylvania, in 2008, and *Haunting Narratives*, a major exhibition at the Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia, in 2012. He is the Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot Professor of Art at Swarthmore College and has taught at the institution since 1982. Exon is also a continuing Fellow at the Ballinglen Arts Foundation in Ballycastle, Co. Mayo, Ireland. Since the fall of 1997 he has returned each year for extended periods of time painting along the northwest coast of Mayo. Exon has exhibited extensively across the United States and the United Kingdom. The artist lives and works in Wallingford, PA.

Randall Exon *Maritime* opens at Hirschl & Adler Modern on Wednesday, September 14 and runs through Friday, October 14, 2022. Located on the 9th floor of the Fuller Building, at the corner of 57th Street and Madison Avenue, Hirschl & Adler Modern is open Monday through Friday, from 9:30 am to 5:15 pm.

For additional information or images, contact Shelley Farmer, Director, or Ted Holland, Exhibition Coordinator, at 212-535-8810 (phone) / 212-772-7237 (fax), or by email at shelleyf@HirschlAndAdler.com or tedh@HirschlAndAdler.com. Please visit our website at www.HirschlAndAdler.com for an online preview of the exhibition.