

# The Pit

The Pit is pleased to present Peter Shire & Craig Kucia, a two-person exhibition featuring both LA-based artists. On view from March 28 – May 1, 2021, with a socially-distanced public reception from 11am - 5pm on Saturday March 27th, this exhibition pairs new paintings by Kucia with Shire's drawings, ceramics, and two furniture works.

Accessibility is a thematic key that unlocks play in these two artists' oeuvres. Both challenge form and function through serial practices that evoke familiar archetypes and identities by creating attractive, irresistible objects that upon closer investigation, subvert comfortable associations. What Kucia calls a carefully crafted "goofiness" pervades his and Shire's works; a sense of joyous, wild pastiche through uses of repetitive imagery, easily available materials, and bright Pop color schemes invites postmodern conversations about replication's impossibility, aleatory originality, and potentials for resplendence in simulacra.

As Craig Kucia's second exhibition of whale paintings at the gallery, this suite of 17 new works welcomes light bulbs into the mix. What do whales and light bulbs have in common? Two decades deep into painting light bulbs, this subject is far from new for Kucia. He has refined and scaled down a large-scale canvas practice that proliferated decadent, PoMo-surreal landscapes populated by symbolic objects such as light bulbs, bees, and trees that psychedelically vibrated with early computer graphic vibes. In these new works, sperm whales and light bulbs provide perfect stereotypical fodder for satirical evisceration, operating as vocabulary that taps common conscience despite eluding fixed meanings. Most importantly, they celebrate paint. Lush color, humorous twists, and paradoxical compositional moves generate viewing pleasure and lend these compact paintings magnetic vitality.

Peter Shire's similarly bold aesthetics discombobulate functional objects, like teapots and chairs, as well as public sculptures, like pergolas that provide shade. Shire's works here, that include three framed architectural drawings, two furniture pieces, and six ceramic objects, all reconfigure assumptions about domestic repose, luxury, and vulgarity. Excess is slippery and elastic in Shire's designs; his objects enjoy befuddling judgment. Are minimal forms slathered with emphatic color applications and complicated by drastic scale shifts deviant and grotesque, bastions of elite taste, or both? All the works in this exhibition consider how humans engage with their environments, by reminding us to marvel at unpredictability.

Both artists challenge the notion of function as a basis for their creations. Shire's ceramics continually question what exactly constitutes a "teapot" and whether the viewer is looking at a functional object or abstracted sculpture. Similarly, Kucia's paintings are presented in hand-painted frames. Both bodies of works take inspiration from the domestic space. Kucia's frames create clever plays on narrative and symbolism by creating patterns that play off the scenario painted on the canvases. The frames visually bare more of a resemblance to frames that have been lovingly painted and discovered at a thrift store than a fine art frame shop. Again, the functional aspect of the object takes a back seat to an opportunity for aesthetic play.

Please email [info@the-pit.la](mailto:info@the-pit.la) with inquiries about both artists.

Craig Kucia received his BFA from the Cleveland Institute of Art. Recent solo and group exhibitions include those at The Pit (LA, 2020); Shane Campbell Gallery (Chicago, 2019); IBID Gallery (LA, 2018); and Artist Curated Projects (LA, 2018). His work is included in the collections of Progressive Art, Cleveland OH; Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia; Perez Art Museum, Miami FL; High Museum of Art, Atlanta GA; and the Mugar Family Collection.

Peter Shire has created ceramics, furniture, toys, interior designs, and public sculptures that reference and parody Bauhaus, Futurism, Art Nouveau, and Art Deco. As a founding member of the Milan-based Memphis design group, Shire has an impressive international exhibition record. Recent and forthcoming exhibitions include a solo exhibition at Nina Johnson (Miami, 2021), and a Memphis Milano retrospective at Vitra Design Museum (Weil am Rhein, 2021-2022). Shire attended Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles, and his works are included in numerous public collections and museums.

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## Peter Shire

*Checkered Present (No Time Like the Future) (12:37 Anytime)*, 2016

Gouache on rag paper

33 x 25 inches

84 x 64 cm

PS0002



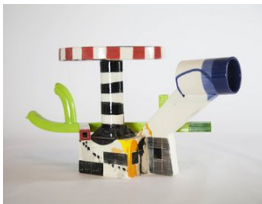
## Peter Shire

*Domius Claudias*, 2016

Whiteware with cone 06 glazes

11 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 21 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 12 $\frac{1}{8}$  in.

PS0001



## Peter Shire

*Taking The Lawn Into Your Own Hands (9-9:30 Anytime)*, 2016

Gouache on rag paper

33 x 25 in.

84 x 64 cm

PS0003



## Peter Shire

*Proposal for Kvadrat - Parisian*, 2016

Gouache on rag paper

11 x 8.5 in.

PS0004



## Peter Shire

*Corrugated Spirit 1*, 2018

Steel, two-part polyurethane

56 $\frac{5}{8}$  x 31 x 26 $\frac{5}{8}$  in.

PS0005



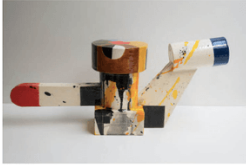


**Peter Shire**

*Circus Bauhaus (Center Ring), 2018*

Whiteware with cone 06 glazes, stainless steel top  
28 x 16½ x 5¼ in.

PS0006



**Peter Shire**

*Mexican Bauhaus House Music, 2016*

Whiteware with cone 06 glazes  
10½ x 23⅞ x 7¾ in.

PS0007



**Peter Shire**

*Guanajuato Dreams, 2006*

Whiteware with cone 06 glazes, stainless steel top  
27 x 13 x 4 in.

PS0008



**Peter Shire**

*Circus Bauhaus (Left Ring), 2018*

Whiteware with cone 06 glazes, stainless steel top  
28 x 16½ x 5¼ in.

PS0009



**Peter Shire**

*Oh My Cats, 2007*

Steel and enamel  
47 x 18 x 39 in.

119 x 46 x 99 cm

PS0010



**Peter Shire**

*Tower Vernon, 2017*

Whiteware with cone 06 glazes, stainless steel tops  
21⅞ x 17½ x 8½ in.

44 x 22 cm

PS0011



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Whale), 2021*

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

12 x 9 inches

30 x 23 cm

13 x 10 inches (framed)

CK0081



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Whale), 2021*

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

12 x 9 inches

30 x 23 cm

13 x 10 inches (framed)

CK0080



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Whale), 2021*

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

12 x 9 inches

30 x 23 cm

13 x 10 inches (framed)

CK0079



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Whale), 2021*

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

12 x 9 inches

30 x 23 cm

13 x 10 inches (framed)

CK0078



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Lightbulb), 2021*

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

14 x 11 inches

36 x 28 cm

15 x 12 inches (framed)

CK0077



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Lightbulb), 2021*

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

14 x 11 inches

36 x 28 cm

15 x 12 inches (framed)

CK0076



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Lightbulb), 2021*

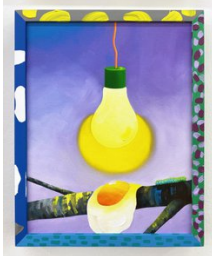
Oil on canvas in artist's frame

14 x 11 inches

36 x 28 cm

15 x 12 inches (framed)

CK0075



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Lightbulb), 2021*

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

14 x 11 inches

36 x 28 cm

15 x 12 inches (framed)

CK0074



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Lightbulb), 2021*

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

14 x 11 inches

36 x 28 cm

15 x 12 inches (framed)

CK0073



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Whale), 2021*

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

12 x 9 inches

30 x 23 cm

13 x 10 inches (framed)

CK0072



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Whale), 2021*

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

12 x 9 inches

30 x 23 cm

13 x 10 inches (framed)

CK0071



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Whale), 2021*

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

12 x 9 inches

30 x 23 cm

13 x 10 inches (framed)

CK0070



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Whale), 2021*

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

12 x 9 inches

30 x 23 cm

13 x 10 inches (framed)

CK0069



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Whale), 2021*

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

12 x 9 inches

30 x 23 cm

13 x 10 inches (framed)

CK0068



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Whale), 2021*

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

12 x 9 inches

30 x 23 cm

13 x 10 inches (framed)

CK0067



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Lightbulb), 2021*

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

14 x 11 in.

36 x 28 cm

15 x 10 in. (framed)

CK0082



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Lightbulb), 2021*

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

14 x 11 in.

36 x 28 cm

15 x 12 in. (framed)

CK0083



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Lightbulb), 2021*

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

14 x 11 in.

36 x 28 cm

15 x 12 in. (framed)

CK0084



**Craig Kucia**

*Untitled (Lightbulb)*, 2021

Oil on canvas in artist's frame

14 x 11 in.

36 x 28 cm

15 x 12 in. (framed)

CK0085