

Paul McDevitt

Marginalia Bacchanalia

20.02.2026 - 21.03.2026

Marginalia Bacchanalia is Paul McDevitt's sixth solo exhibition with Martin Asbæk Gallery. The backbone of the exhibition is a group of the artist's *Notes to Self* series of drawings, displayed both on the walls and installed in a custom-built table which snakes through the gallery.

These drawings begin as notes and reminders on McDevitt's desk, which are later worked over in paint and ink. The notes serve as way to kickstart new ideas, as the emergent drawings respond to the content and formal aspects of the notes. The resulting works are spontaneous, playful, and introduce ideas to be explored in other formats. In this exhibition they are also the source of inspiration for two new series of works.

A series of paintings use apartment-block intercoms as the starting point for formal compositions. These contain no information about the residents nor the location of the building. They're the kind of doorbells that one frequently sees in Berlin's dysfunctional rental market, where prices have dramatically increased, and registering for residence is a bureaucratic nightmare. The result is short-term rentals and sublets for those coming and going, and especially for non-nationals. Layers of stickers and crossed out names. Arrows point to buzzers that don't work, and the ones that are best for deliveries. Together they offer a kind of portrait of those who fall through the cracks in a bureaucratic country fuelled by a rise in rightwing hostility towards immigrants.

Those same immigrants are the ones who deliver the goods and services upon which the city relies. They made it tick during two years of lockdowns. The last series of works in the exhibition are collectively titled *White Van Green Man*, and are made in a patchwork of coloured felts. They feature cartoon delivery logos seen in the artist's home city of Berlin. Here those vernacular cartoons have been transformed into verdant, foliated figures. The green man motif is a common ornamental symbol in medieval architecture and art, especially in the UK, France, and Germany. Representing growth and renewal, the figure is a symbol of regeneration. These works might be read as an allegory for the regenerative powers of immigrant workers stuck in a city that is stuck in its ways.

Marginalia Bacchanalia is a purposeful overload of artworks in a variety of techniques and styles – the gallery full of clues and interlocking elements. Like the accompanying exhibition, *Gesucht!*, by McDevitt's students in Arden Asbæk Gallery, it is an attempt to find poetry in the mundane, beauty in the quotidian. Hopefully each visitor leaves having experienced the exhibition in a different way.

Paul McDevitt (b. 1972) was born in Troon, Scotland, and graduated from the Chelsea College of Art in London in 2000. He lives and works in Berlin and teaches at Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design Halle. With numerous exhibitions internationally, spanning the USA, Italy, Denmark, Brazil, Spain, UK, Germany, France and Sweden, Paul McDevitt is represented in several large public and private collections.