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SIMON DENNY
Forces of the Unknown
JW Marriott Hotel Berlin, Salon 12-13
Stauffenbergstraße 26
10785 Berlin

Presented by Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin (DE)
13.06.2025–15.06.2025 (solo)

'To paraphrase a manifesto of a different time and place: 'Beauty exists only in struggle. There is no masterpiece that has not an aggressive character. Technology must be a violent assault on the forces of the unknown, to force them to bow before man'.'
– The Techno-Optimist Manifesto, Marc Andreessen (2023)

Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler is pleased to present *Forces of the Unknown*, a three-day exhibition of new paintings by Berlin-based, New Zealand-born artist Simon Denny. Installed in the charged context of the JW Marriott Hotel, directly across from the German Defense Department and the German Resistance Memorial Centre, the exhibition inhabits a space where historical resonance meets contemporary urgency. Denny's new works reflect the increasing military focus of the tech industry, especially within US and German innovation cultures. The new paintings have been produced using a custom-built suite of tools: modified CNC machines, reprogrammed plotters, and a hand-held industrial inkjet printer, originally designed for marking shipping crates. The resulting works shift fluidly between human and machine-made, analogue and digital, strategic and improvisational.

The exhibition unfolds through two distinct work bodies. One, rendered in stark black and white using the hand-held inkjet, distorts imagery from the promotional materials of contemporary Defense-Tech firms such as Anduril, Palantir, and Helsing.

The second series unfolds in digitally rendered color. Generated via AI models trained on Italian Futurist paintings—particularly those of Giacomo Balla and Tullio Crali. These works echo the aesthetic legacy of Futurist Aeropainting while embedding the techno-utopian fantasies of the present. The AI-produced compositions are then interpreted by robotic arms wielding traditional brushes, with layers of sprayed ink completing the hybrid process. These 'plotter paintings' also echo early computer art experiments done by artists in research institutions with similar technology in the 1950s.

Throughout *Forces of the Unknown*, Denny threads a narrative of historical recurrence. Figures such as Palmer Luckey, founder of Anduril, and venture capitalist Marc Andreessen—who has cited Marinetti—appear as contemporary avatars of a Futurist mindset: visionary, disruptive, and rhetorically charged. The works expose a strange symmetry between the avant-garde past and the speculative politics of today's Defense-Tech sphere.

Denny's approach challenges the viewer to reconsider authorship and intentionality in the age of machine learning. His paintings are not merely outputs—they are indexes of a system, gestures caught in loops of data, code, and geopolitical ambition. Their textured surfaces register not only technological processes but also the volatile desires they encode.

With *Forces of the Unknown*, Denny invites into a visual and conceptual field where tools become agents, aesthetics become tactics, and history is continually rewritten through images. The result is a thoughtful exploration of the present moment—analytical, layered, and responsive to the shifting contours of technology and power.

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SIMON DENNY (b. 1982 Auckland, New Zealand) lives and works in Berlin, Germany. He makes artworks that unpack stories about technology using a variety of media including painting, web-based media, installation, sculpture, print and video. He studied at the Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland and at the Städelschule, Frankfurt am Main.

Relevant solo exhibitions include Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler at JW Marriott Hotel Berlin, (2025); Petzel Gallery, New York (2024); Kunstverein Hannover (2023); K21- Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2020); the Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania (2019); Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland (2018); OCAT- OCT Contemporary Art Terminal (2017); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2017); WIELS Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels (2016); Serpentine Galleries, London (2015); Museum of Modern Art PS1, New York (2015); Portikus, Frankfurt (2014); mumok - Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna (2013); Kunstverein Munich (2013).

Denny represented New Zealand at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015. Denny has curated exhibitions such as Proof of Stake at Kunstverein in Hamburg (2021) and Proof of Work at Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin (2018).

His works is part of the collections of: The Museum of Modern Art, New York ; Kunstsammlung Nordrhein Westfalen, Düsseldorf ; Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis ; Buffalo AKG Art Museum; Kunsthaus Zürich ; Sammlung zeitgenössischer Kunst der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn ; Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg ; Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington.

He co-founded the artist mentoring program BPA//Berlin Program for Artists and serves as a Professor of Time-Based Media at The Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg.