



UNPREDICTABLE DAVID GOLDES

January 27 - March 11, 2023

The metals dipped in acid solutions, salty and rusting in that painful bath, began to conduct in darkness. Awakening from their stiff lifelessness, they hummed monotonously, sang metallicly, shone molecularly in the incessant dusk of those mournful and late days.

- *The Street of Crocodiles* by Bruno Schulz (1934)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dreamsong is pleased to present *Unpredictable*, a solo presentation of recent drawings by David Goldes. Largely created during the deep uncertainty of the pandemic, this resonant, luminous body of work internalizes and projects the hazard and possibilities of our unpredictable times. Atop grounds of black gesso inlaid with abstract forms, the artist uses graphite as a conduit, electrifying drawings to produce mysterious trajectories of burnt edges and voids, while in other works inviting chemical reactions to tarnish areas of silver leaf with metallic tones of yellow, orange, green, and blue. The drawings trace invisible phenomena by embracing chance and risk, revealing both the wonder of electricity and the pearlescent radiance of altered silver. Materially fascinating, Goldes playful

and innovative approach to the fundamental properties of graphite and silver leaf results in works that speak to interconnection, boundaries, protection and discovery amid the instability of our increasingly complex world.

Enthralled with electricity from a young age, Goldes' childhood experiments with homemade radios eventually developed into a course of scientific study that culminated with a graduate degree in molecular genetics from Harvard. Retaining his longstanding interests in physics, biology, and chemistry, Goldes' artistic practice incorporates scientific phenomena in the creation of images. The artist's photographic works document the material attributes of various substances and forms of energy, including water and electricity, through enigmatic images that record phenomena such as surface tension, combustion, and gravitational

pull. The artist's drawings expand on this practice by allowing electrical transmission and chemical reaction to determine the physical form of the work, becoming mark-making devices that leave permanent vestiges and emphasize their materiality.

Alongside its scientific underpinnings, Goldes' practice frequently makes reference to other artists, and the drawings include homages to Ellsworth Kelly's monolithic shaped panels and Carmen Herrera's mastery of form and composition. Recalling the material concerns of post-minimalism, the drawings can be read within a lineage of artists that imbue formalist compositional strategies with personal and social concerns. While Goldes began the series with hard-edged geometric abstractions, the social upheaval of the global pandemic brought his prior epidemiological training to the forefront, leading him to explore the relational dynamics of cellular and biomorphic forms in his compositions, and to seek metaphorical meaning in representations of infection, protection, isolation, and touch.

As in the scientific phenomena they employ, Goldes' drawings were born of trial and error, and their emotional resonance emerges from a lyrical balance between precise draftsmanship and chance discovery. Intuitively, Goldes understands that transformation, in all its chaos, risk, and promise, begins at the margins. In the *Unpredictable* drawings, edges are singed, boundaries break down, and amoebic interlopers take root in the body. In *Zone* (2021) globules of pulsing, tarnished silver breach the outer walls of a graphite cellular form, beginning the colonization of its interior; in *Touching #26* (2020) the slight contact between two radiant graphite spheres is ignited, burning back the edges of both, while also linking them further. Together, the drawings are a careful study of interaction – personal, social, scientific – that celebrate resilience and intimacy while embodying the unpredictable consequences of change, which begins first at a distance, and then inevitably sweeps us up in its stead.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Educated first as a scientist, David Goldes holds a B.A. in Chemistry and Biology from SUNY at Buffalo, M.A. in Molecular Genetics from Harvard, and M.F.A. in Photography from the Visual Studies Workshop/SUNY-Buffalo and was designated a Professor Emeritus from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) in 2017. Born in Brooklyn, NY, he has lived and worked in Minneapolis since 1979. David Goldes has been awarded numerous fellowships and residencies including those from the Guggenheim Foundation, NEA, Bush Foundation, McKnight Foundation and Minnesota State Arts Board, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, and MacDowell. His work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, NY; Whitney Museum of Art; Art Institute of Chicago; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Minneapolis Institute of the Arts; Yale Art Museum; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; and the Musée Nicéphore-Niépce, Chalon-sur-Saône, France. Radius Books has recently published David Goldes: *Unpredictable Drawings* (2023) with text by Walker Art Center curator Pavel Pyš. Previous books include *Water Being Water* (Wright State University, 2005) and *Electricities* (Damiani, 2017).

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Dear Earth, 2021
Graphite, altered silver leaf
and black gesso on paper
18 x 15 inches