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PRESS RELEASE

## DAMIEN FLOOD

### *Theory of Two Centres*

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Stephane Simoens Contemporary Fine Arts is pleased to announce the first solo exhibition of the Irish painter Damien Flood (° 1979).

Damien Flood creates mystic and complex landscapes that oscillate between abstraction and figuration. They are the visual result of his deep involvement with early writings on philosophy, theology, alchemy, and natural science. Flood uses these ideas and perceptions of the world as starting point for his painted exploration of the mutability of reality, and the ways how factual knowledge becomes fiction.

The title of his recent show refers to *Theory of Two Centres* by Augustine who proposed his idea of a world with two centres – one of earth and one of water - both exist next to each other to combine the traditional Earth theory of antipodes with the theory of a spherical form.

It is this idea of duality that interests Flood. His new paintings clearly prove it. Their motifs combine opposites that don't exclude but complete each other - such as absence and presence, chaos and order, abstraction and figuration or geometrical form and artistic gesture.

In most of the paintings, the figure looms more presently than in earlier works, occasionally sharply and at times as a fragment or fading memory.

In *Second life* a head seems to emerge from an abstract red area that floats in front of a skylike background. Pink leaves remind us of ears and eyes. But as Flood sets up the image he already makes us doubt it: A stripe slices the middle and breaks up the illusion of a head that therefore becomes again an abstract form which is connected with the background.

In *Dimensions Variable* a hand measures the room that is outlined by a few lines and single objects that are loosely arranged across the raw canvas. The painting demonstrates

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how Flood uses reduction as an essential element in his working process. He removes all additional information and opens up the motif to a new interpretation, while the missing parts receive the same significance as the visible ones.

In works like *Migrate* and *Fallen Leave* the paint itself gains a life and importance of its own. The twisted and smeared paint creates fractal-like forms and showcases the deep interest of Flood in the medium itself. The gesturally painted brushstrokes show his enthusiasm for the technical possibilities of oil paint as well as for the subconscious and intuitive nature of the act of painting.

The paintings in *Theory of Two Centres* merge different narratives and philosophical ideas as well as formal art historical references such as surrealist or modern image compositions à la Miro, Kandinsky or de Chirico. Damien Flood combines them into his own image language. He mixes the conscious with the subconscious and questions the habits of viewing. The viewer is asked to give up their preconception and to be open towards a new experience when facing the presented elements.

The titles play an important role and underline Flood's artistic approach. Mostly reduced to a single word, they seem to explain the meaning at the first glance. But upon closer examination the titles' ambiguity becomes apparent and thereby the work invites the beholder to pursue further interpretation.

Flood's paintings defy set boundaries. They demonstrate in open and multi-layered images: the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

Damien Flood (b. 1979) lives and works in Dublin. Recent exhibitions include *Carrion Flowers*, The Cabin, Los Angeles; *2116 Forecast of the New Century*, The Broad Art Museum, Michigan USA; *Wouldn't it be nice be nice if we could dream together*; Diane Rosenstein Gallery, Los Angeles; *A Root That Turns as the Sun Turns*, Green on Red Gallery, Dublin, Ireland; *Infinite Plane*, Grey Noise, Dubai.