

DEREK ELLER GALLERY



Standing Bat II, 2022, glazed ceramic, acrylic, wood, cement, 65 x 48 x 12 inches

STEVE KEISTER

Split Level

July 16 – August 22, 2025

Opening Reception: Wednesday, July 16, 6–8 pm

Derek Eller Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of mixed-media sculpture and wall-based works by Steve Keister entitled *Split Level*. Informed by Mesoamerican architecture and sculpture, Keister conjures bespoke deities that pay homage to Pre-Colombian myth. At the core of his ethos is a profound interest in human and animal consciousness; Keister extrapolates his subjects from Central American mythology to develop a complex ecosystem of mystical fauna.

Keister's practice employs a diverse range of material including wood, ceramic, Styrofoam, and cardboard, most of which is scavenged and repurposed. This action was instigated by his discovery of a formal correlation between Styrofoam and cardboard packing cartons and Mesoamerican architecture and sculpture. To signify this relationship, he developed a process of casting ceramic slip in plaster molds. The plaster molds were derived from voids contained in the Styrofoam, as well as the exteriors of the cartons, thereby accumulating a vocabulary of forms both large and small and allowing increased flexibility. Eventually, these evolved into wall pieces, a kind of ceramic collage on painted plywood.

Disparate types of movement are represented throughout the works in this exhibition. Free-standing sculptures adopt static stances reflecting their monumental nature. Wall-mounted works extend beyond their own bodies through bright painted line, suspended in perpetual dance. The resulting community is as contemporary as it is archaic.

Steve Keister (b.1949, Lancaster, PA; lives and works in New York, NY) earned a BFA and an MFA from Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia. He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship and a Gottlieb Foundation Grant, among other awards. He has had solo exhibitions at Freddy, Harris, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Texas Gallery, Houston; Blum Helman, New York; Galerie Rudolf Zwirner, Cologne; Feature, Inc, New York; Mitchell Alpus, New York; and Gagosian, Los Angeles. This will be his second solo exhibition with the Gallery.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 38 Walker Street between Broadway and Church Street. Summer hours (July & August) are Monday – Friday, 10am to 6pm, and by appointment. For further information please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit www.derekeller.com.