

DEREK ELLER GALLERY



Untitled (detail), 2025, graffiti wall, plastic sheet, and veneer laminate in custom aluminum frame, 26.625 x 34.75 x 1.75 inches

ARA PETERSON

Stratacaster

January 16 – February 14, 2026

Opening Reception: Friday, January 16, 6–8 pm

Derek Eller Gallery is pleased to present *Stratacaster*, a solo show of recent sculptural paintings by Ara Peterson. Continuing his exploration of “strata graphics”—phenomena of sculptural remnants revealed by means of cutting into a prepared three-dimensional material—the wall-based works in this exhibition walk the line between visual balance and spontaneity. Generating a topography through kinetic processes, Peterson mines a composition which is defined by both deliberate choices and chance occasions.

For over two decades, Peterson has used film, video, clay, paint, and wood to investigate ideas about stratification in space and time. In this new body of work, he creates unique hand-built plywood that combines layers of wood veneer, plastic sheet, and in some cases “graffiti wall” salvaged from a local tunnel. Using a CNC router, the work is revised during all stages of the production to achieve a complex, textural, and rhythmic field of movement in relief with its own living qualities.

The router’s tooling generates unexpected interactions with the materials; fine and course ridges appear on the surface of the wood, giving the look of expanding and contracting corduroy fabric. Introducing the mined graffiti wall into the sequence allows for further visual variety. Peterson explains, “It’s exciting when different layers have their own living qualities, like the growth of the wood grain in a tree burl or the thickness of spray paint that’s been applied by hundreds of people over many years.”

Ara Peterson (b. 1973, Boston) works from his studio in Providence, Rhode Island. He received his BFA in Film/Video/Animation from the Rhode Island School of Design. Recent solo exhibitions include *Ratio 3*, San Francisco; *LOYAL*, Malmo; *Fuller Speed Shop*, Providence; *Scooters for Peace*, Tokyo. Selected group exhibitions include *Material Instinct*, Post Times, New York; *Electric Op*, curated by Tina Ryan, AKG Art Museum, Buffalo; *The Bellport Anarchist Society*, curated by Barry McGee, Auto Body, Bellport, Long Island; *At Home*, curated by Dan Nadel, Launch F18, New York; *The Optical Unconscious*, curated by Bob Nickas, Rapperswil-Jona, Switzerland. As a founding member of the art and performance group Forcefield (1996-

2003), Peterson released multiple records and videos, and participated in the 2002 Biennial Exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, as well as *What Nerve! Alternative Figures in American Art, 1960 to the Present*, RISD Museum, Providence, RI and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York. His work has been written about in *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *Time Out*, *Art on Paper*, *Beautiful Decay*, *The Surfers Journal*, and more. This will be his second solo exhibition with the Gallery.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 38 Walker Street between Broadway and Church Street. Hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 10am to 6pm, and by appointment. For further information please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit www.derekeller.com.