

For Immediate Release

Pepa Prieto

Symmetry for Survival

7 November – 19 December 2020

**Social Distance Opening Reception: Saturday, November 7, 2:00 – 6:00pm
(controlled capacity and masks required)**

Walter Maciel Gallery is pleased to present *Symmetry of Survival* by Pepa Prieto. Prieto was born and raised in Granada, Spain and lived in Madrid where she started her art career. She moved to the US in 2010 and has lived in Brooklyn for nearly 11 years. This exhibition of paintings is her third solo show at our gallery.

In her newest body of work, the imagery takes its lead from the title of the show, *Symmetry for Survival* referencing Prieto's desire to establish order and simplicity in her studio practice as a way to offset the ongoing turmoil and chaos she has been experiencing in her personal life. For the past couple of years, Prieto has been engaged in the care and medical decisions of her father's failing health juggling her time with travel between New York and Madrid. Prieto began the production for our show at the end of last year with a desire to execute structure in her painting as a way to control the imagery in defiance of the lack of control she has been experiencing with her father's care. The chaos was heightened as the pandemic took over earlier in the year and travel became more difficult while everyday life became isolated and mundane.

Unlike her previous works with painterly borders and frames around overlapping areas of colorful markings, the new images depict forms and shapes applied with acrylics and oil stick on raw canvas that are mirrored on the surfaces like a palindrome. The show includes mostly small format paintings leading into one large multi-panel painting with patterns continuing across the surface alternating in contradictory colors. Her palettes are muted with soft hues of green, pink, beige, yellow and brown often applied with washy pigments to reveal the texture of the linen underneath. The organic forms overlap with delicate hand painted darker outlines to emphasize the shapes that allude to designs found in weavings and on fabrics.

As a child living in Granada among artists and creative types, Prieto was influenced by her father who was a prominent architect and her mother who was a skilled potter and used these memories as a guide for the structure and patterning in this body of work. Furthermore, Prieto's personal interest in the Arte Povera movement which took place in Italy in the 1960s and 1970s is prevalent taking cues from Mario and Marissa Merz and Jannis Kounellis with a analysis and validation of taking ordinary and natural objects and presenting them as art forms. Prieto creates her simplified forms in relationship to one another on the two dimensional surfaces of her paintings. The production of the show became an exercise of repetitions with several paintings being created at any given time. In her previous life as a professional snowboarder, Prieto was constantly reminded of the individualistic and very present decisions she had to employ in order to perform well in her sport while at the same time not injure herself. These same notions and characteristics are employed in her production as a painter with a demand of physical movement, mental thought and spiritual awareness. Prieto creates an opportunity for experimentation trying to combine memories of her past life living in Spain with her current life as a painter in New York. The paintings are visual reminders that art can create a universal language that stems from one's personal experience and is accessible to everyone.

Prieto received both her BFA and MFA in painting at University Complutense in Madrid, Spain. Last year she presented a solo exhibition entitled *Together We Are Better* at Espacio Valverde Gallery in Madrid. In 2017 Prieto had a solo show entitled *Unhappy Hens Do Not Lay Eggs* at Galerie Xippas in Geneva and she was included in a two person exhibition with Dean Monogenis entitled *Polarities* at Bryce Wolkowitz Gallery in New York. Prieto and Monogenis were also featured in a two person exhibition entitled *PAINTING IS DEAD. Long Live Painting* which was curated by Jackie Herbst at the Center of Contemporary Art, at Andratx in Palma de Mallorca, Spain where she was in residence in 2012 and 2016. Other group exhibitions include *Grafforists* at the Torrance Art Museum, *Exhibition 1* at the New International Society in Berlin and *Exhibition 2* at the New International Society, Museum of New Art, Camille Gallery in Detroit. Prieto did a Fountain Head Residency in Miami in 2010 and is included in several private collection in the US and Europe.