

Pierre

Bidden or  
Unbidden  
Enter the  
Hot Room

Vermeulen

**Pierre**

**Opening  
8 February 2025**

**Bidden or Unbidden,  
Enter the Hot Dream**

**WITW × KRONE  
Tulbagh**

**Vermeulen**

I dedicate this exhibition to Andrew Da Conceicao. He was a north star to my creative process and gave me a lot of light when I could see little. Before he passed he told me to look at the mountains and within. Thank you Andrew.

Pierre Vermeulen's creative process blends meditation, ritual, and the exploration of archetypes and symbols. He draws inspiration from both ancient and modern influences, including mystical spirituality. Vermeulen reflects on the idea of divine presence and the intersection of the sacred and profane, using materials like ex-voto casts, sweat, and gold and silver leaf to embody these themes. His work involves repetitive, ritualistic actions that merge the distinction between performance and meditation, leading to paintings that explore dualities like light and dark, masculine and feminine. Through his exploration of mythology, ritual, and human performativity, Vermeulen aims to engage with the unconscious and spiritual dimensions of existence, inviting viewers to look deeper within and confront the complexities of their own inner worlds.

Some guiding principles and expressions from my studio

*Bidden or Unbidden,  
Enter the Hot Dream*

The mantra I invoke while strolling towards the gallery on the farm; *Show me, I am ready to receive, I am coming*, drifts from my mind as I see the mountains reflected in the mirror installed above the entrance. My body moves closer and upon reaching the bottom steps outside the building, the reflected mountain has shifted to a clear blue sky – heaven has been pulled into the temple. I enter. *Come on!*

*Bidden or Unbidden, Enter the Hot Dream* takes its name from both a Biblical verse that Carl G. Jung had engraved above the door to his castle which was later carved on his tomb stone; and *Ghost Song*, a poem by Jim Morrison. The Latin translation of the Biblical verse reads as *Called or uncalled, God is present. For me*, the potency of this verse is matched by Jim's invitation to "...*enter the hot dream...*". I combined the two. The feeling of something present, which is always in my meditation, also

occurs during events of synchronicity and ecstasy. I relate it to pre-religion, before orthodoxy – something more mystical, experiential, gnostical and essentially human needing. It is this something which led humans to invent religion. This beckoning call seems like a fairy tale creature, completely archetypal and symbolic, standing at the edge of the green dark forest, with a curling finger, calling me to come in, to go deeper towards the pool: the source of my unconscious.

My previous work was rooted in meditation. The practice of becoming aware of the mind; that there is no thinker of thoughts, that thoughts think themselves. I rested for years with a Lao Tzu poem:

Do you have the patience to wait until the mud has settled and the water is clear? Can you remain unmoving until the right action arises by itself?

I went to hot yoga and collected sweat – as a centrifugal creation story. In the studio I placed sweat soaked hair-orchids on golden panels to tarnish the golden 'ideal'. My paintings are remnants of repetitive performances that are ritualistic, like washing my face before bed at night. The paintings emanate after yoga, after listening to a song over and over again, after I have exhausted my attention to current obsessions. Metal leaf after metal leaf has been stuck to canvas over the years. It is all repetition and ritual to balance whatever I am chasing and what is chasing me. I posited that I had nothing particular to say with the early works, and merely provided a prompt to meditate and let the right action arise by itself. I spoke mostly about form. However, looking back this root had a taproot that reached much deeper than my conscious mind revealed. I shifted the format of all my paintings to a double bed – a shape I return to daily where I cross the threshold of conscious to unconscious, awake to sleep. I became more interested in archetypes, symbols, antiquity, gods, materiality and that which drives it all for me – potency.

Jim Morrison and The Doors crossed my path quite late, considering how readily available they are, and only rang clear when the time was right. Just like the *ex voto* objects I found glimmering in the antique store window I passed in Munich. A knowing filled me to combine

these fascinations. Jim is the energy I called forth and my impression of him being a modern Dionysus-Jesus figure – pointing towards some sort of north star of becoming, as St. Theresa in ecstasy once had.

So, I bought four pairs of cowboy boots and all his collected writings, borrowed leather pants and let my hair grow to evoke the inner Jim – one pair of boots are the actual brand that Jim had. A means to appease this projection that was clearly bordering obsession. I became acutely interested in Jesus again after a decade and a half hiatus. This time I wanted to know more about the mystical Jesus – before the Nicene creed declared selected teachings orthodox. It was with good fortune that the gnostic gospel of St Thomas was presented to me by our modern oracle: AI. Here's a pearl that that St Thomas quoted from Jesus:

If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you.

I intertwined Nietzsche's Dionysian and Apollonian thesis – their interplay and how interest in both chaos and order is required to balance harmonious becoming. Jim and Jesus are Dionysus; the *ex voto*, studio repetitions and vipassana meditation are Apollo. As Jim writes:

Let's reinvent the gods, all the myths  
of the ages  
Celebrate symbols from deep elder  
forests  
Have you forgotten the lessons of the  
ancient war?

We need great golden copulations

The ex votos became a receptacle to mediate this internal-external dialogue. A recalling of the old gods and rearranging them. Unrooting and dismembering the old parts to create new ones. To me the ex votos relate to our zeitgeist too – I feel a loss of meaning circulating as the world is oscillating between constant extremities. There seems to be a need to aim at some sort of abstract higher point. The soil is ready for a curiosity where spirit and human can meet. It is within these grounds that I am sowing the ex votos, rearranging them in excess as a means of abstraction.

One late afternoon in the studio I chose the sign of the day and responded to a sphinx with half a bottle of whiskey, rollies and a Jim performance – she seemed pleased and let me pass her. I let rip, called forth and pitched an ancient cord from a past life to mimic Jim in all his intonations. Repeatedly I worked through the songs that pricked me most with potency – over and over again. Full blast through the studio speakers the groovy rhythmic pulses finally soothed the drive to work with the ex votos – to

access them. I recalled an experience of rising high towards a white-white strikingly pure light, just before it spoke to me, I fell back down to the red earth. Softly surrounded by blades of grass and the liquid transportation fluid of life. Cast after cast, I arranged swarms of the ex votos on the white primed linen canvasses. One was the torso painting that came to fruition that afternoon. The heated torsos rose up like skyscrapers, totems and erections of ancient phallic worshipping cults and Jacob's ladder. It was the arrival of the image of Nut, the Egyptian goddess of water and fertility, that brought union to the three-panel gold painting. The vigour bearing putti angels became a burning bush. The intersecting chaos of the animals and human parts drummed together to figure meaning that I would later decipher. The other paintings followed suit accompanied by György Ligeti, *2001: A Space Odyssey* soundtrack, Schubert, silence and of course, The Doors.

Weeks later, meditating on the passage the sphinx granted me in the studio, I finally accepted to make all the paintings silver, a nudge I had months earlier, but nonetheless questioned. The confronting reflective quality of silver is the alertness a dark night brings – a dark night I feel we are approaching – a blackening. It counters the inviting, although tarnished, gold paintings. I became interested in human performativity: religion or our daily rituals for instance; how and why

our inner children react to events and environments; our weaknesses, strengths and overcompensations. The events that have people turn into caricatures of themselves – they become a unit, an ex voto.

The silvery surfaces are cold with a hint of warmth from the yellow shellac varnish. The yellow windows glow a warm womb-like essence in the temple or a presence of an unidentified entity. As heaven is pulled into the space by the mirror on the outside, so too the masculine sun is brought inside to shine yellow on the feminine silver – coupling together to create. At least two are required for creation. A block of wood needs a chisel to become something else. The ancient wisdom of binaries holding our conceptual understanding of life together still shapes our consciousness – up/down, light/dark. I look at how we perform this materially and symbolically.

These paintings light up with the slightest hint of light even in the darkest room, like the sun is to the moon. They contain the old gods rearranged. There is no sweat, no pheromones, no remnants of action left on the silver. They are confronting and cold. Inverted desire that reaches out as the inner child within will always yearn for a parent-like-deity to deliver us from our shadow. Nonetheless, go deeper and look at the shadow! Go in, inside, answer to the curling finger of the creature outside the forest is beckoning

you to enter curiously.

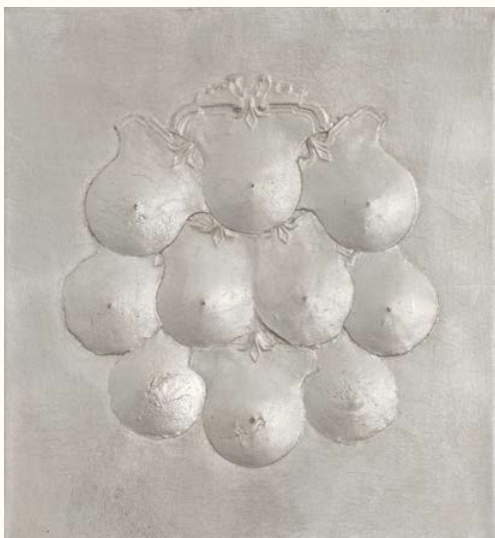
Perhaps...well, this is my impression at least. Looking back at the works I have made over the last year in preparing for this exhibition, trying to understand what I have done and how the new language took shape. It is part personal and autobiographical and part curiosity of what I see through my lens currently unfolding in the world. It is not a critique nor attempt for an answer, it is a mere reflection.

I am reminded of a line in Rocky Horror Picture Show, and not to equate us to insects, but you'll get the picture:

...and crawling on the planets face,  
some insects called the human race,  
lost in time, lost in space and meaning.

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1 Ex votos are objects used to a vow fulfilment or in devotion or gratitude. They depict various aspects of life, from limbs to animals. The ex votos I use have Latin origin; however, they are found India and Ancient Greece too.



*Enter again the sweet forest*, 2025, 25 x 22 cm  
Opposite *Kom swem saam met my*, 2025, 150 x 135 cm







*Come on!*, 2025, 50 x 45 cm  
Opposite *Ride the gold highway*, 2025, 150 x 135 cm





*Shake dreams from your hair my lamb*, 2025, triptych, 200 × 540 cm overall





*Come inside, take warmth, eat this*, 2025, 100 × 90 cm  
Opposite *The walls are red in this room*, 2025, 200 × 180 cm





Page 16 *Which way the wind blows, Side A*, 2025, 200 × 180cm  
Page 17 *Which way the wind blows, Side B*, 2025, 200 × 180cm  
Opposite *Studio sculptures, 2023-2025, yellowwood and found rocks*





## The Ghost Song

Jim Morrison

### Awake

Shake dreams from your hair, my pretty child, my sweet one  
Choose the day and choose the sign of your day the day's divinity  
First thing you see

A vast radiant beach and cooled jewelled moon  
Couples naked race down by its quiet side  
And we laugh like soft, mad children  
Smug in the wooly cotton brains of infancy  
The music and voices are all around us

Choose they croon the Ancient Ones  
The time has come again  
Choose now, they croon  
Beneath the moon  
Beside an ancient lake

Enter again the sweet forest  
Enter the hot dream  
Come with us  
Everything is broken up and dances

Indians scattered  
On dawn's highway bleeding  
Ghosts crowd the young child's  
Fragile eggshell mind

We have assembled inside  
This ancient and insane theater  
To propagate our lust for life  
And flee the swarming wisdom of the streets

The barns have stormed  
The windows kept  
And only one of all the rest  
To dance and save us  
From the divine mockery of words,  
Music inflames temperament

Ooh, great creator of being  
Grant us one more hour  
To perform our art  
And perfect our lives

We need great golden copulations

When the true kings murderers  
Are allowed to roam free  
A thousand magicians arise in the land  
Where are the feast we are promised?

One more thing

Thank you, oh lord  
For the white blind light  
Thank you, oh lord  
For the white blind light

A city rises from the sea  
I had a splitting headache  
From which the future's made

Opposite *One more thing*, 2025, site-specific installation with mirror





Silver paintings:

Silver leaf imitate, gesso, ink and shellac  
on linen

Triptych:

Gold leaf imitate, sweat, gesso, ink and  
shellac on linen

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