

DUTTON

Kevin McNamee-Tweed

Pilcrow

Opening May 25th, 6-8pm

May 25 – July 2, 2023

127 Eldridge St

New York, NY 10002

Dutton presents *Pilcrow*, a solo exhibition by Durham-based artist Kevin McNamee-Tweed, featuring new pictorial ceramics, vessels, and works on paper and canvas in an immersive installation. The artist's third solo exhibition in New York centers on themes such as self-mythology, End-Times, and New York itself, where he lived for years before eventually returning to his native North Carolina, a state steeped in clay tradition.

Kevin McNamee-Tweed's practice investigates the mechanics of meaning-making and storytelling, and embraces broad material exploration to create images and objects that narrate, measure, or express nuances of human experience and material reality. While much of his work may be naturally situated within the context of image-making, painting, and drawing, McNamee-Tweed works extensively with clay. Incorporating native clays and regional traditions, the artist relies on time-honored as well as idiosyncratic uses of clay and glaze materials. He makes intimate, utilitarian objects and many things which situate themselves between categories, such as function-resistant objects, ceramic books, and wall-hanging pictorial ceramics, which have become his primary focus in recent years.

McNamee-Tweed's pictorial ceramics or 'ceramic paintings', employ meticulous techniques, controlled processes, and tempered experimentation to achieve image-based corporeality featuring exaggerated surfaces, textures and visual effects. Relating intimately to the hand and the eye, these book-sized objects carry a strong element of storytelling. Often with pathos and playfulness, his narratives include personal, mundane, or grandiose ruminations, while his stylistic tendencies and formal sensibilities span references from the art-historical to the commonplace. Frequently, his imagery reflects on traditions of image and object making, with particular emphasis on quotidian visual culture, the history of painting, and, the immense lineage of practical application and artistic expression with ceramics.

Never far from a link to books, language, or writing, the title of the exhibition refers to the typographical symbol for a paragraph. Used originally in hand-written medieval manuscripts to denote a natural pause in dictation or a shift in subject, the pilcrow's presence waned with the emergence of mechanical printing. It returned to widespread use with the invention of word processing systems on early home computers. The project comes full circle with the accompaniment of an artist book entitled *Pure Paragraphs* edited by Kevin McNamee-Tweed and poet and publisher Bradley King. Loosely connected thematically to the show, the book gathers 130 paragraphs from artists and writers. The publication echoes McNamee-Tweed's interest in decentralized or redistributed authorship while the artist's gravitation to the paragraph can be linked to the manner in which he crafts images—truncated vignettes, fragments of a wider picture or narrative.

Kevin McNamee-Tweed (b. 1984) is based in Durham, North Carolina. He received an MA and MFA from The University of Iowa and a BFA from New York University. Recent exhibitions include solo shows at Cob Gallery (London), Steve Turner (Los Angeles), L21 Gallery (Mallorca), Harper's (New York), Rod Barton (London), Devening Projects (Chicago), The Still House Group (New York), and The Menil Collection Books (Houston). He has participated in group shows in Germany, Italy, Spain, France, Australia, Iceland, Greece, and the UK. He is the recipient of numerous awards and residencies including the Ella Fountain Pratt Award, the Mildred Pelzer Grant, the Wilhelm and Jane Bodine Fellowship, The Iowa Arts Fellowship, and the Montello Foundation Fellowship. Reviews of his work have appeared in *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Artnet*, *Glasstire*, and *Hyperallergic*, among others. A monograph on his ceramic work was published by Steve Turner (Los Angeles) in 2020. Upcoming projects include solo exhibitions at The Institute of Contemporary Art in Chattanooga, Tennessee and The Greenville County Museum of Art in South Carolina, as well as two new books, including a monograph surveying McNamee-Tweed's interdisciplinary practice.