

ARTIST

Otto Ford



Installation view: Otto Ford, *Collider* solo exhibition at GNYP Gallery in 2018

Otto Ford

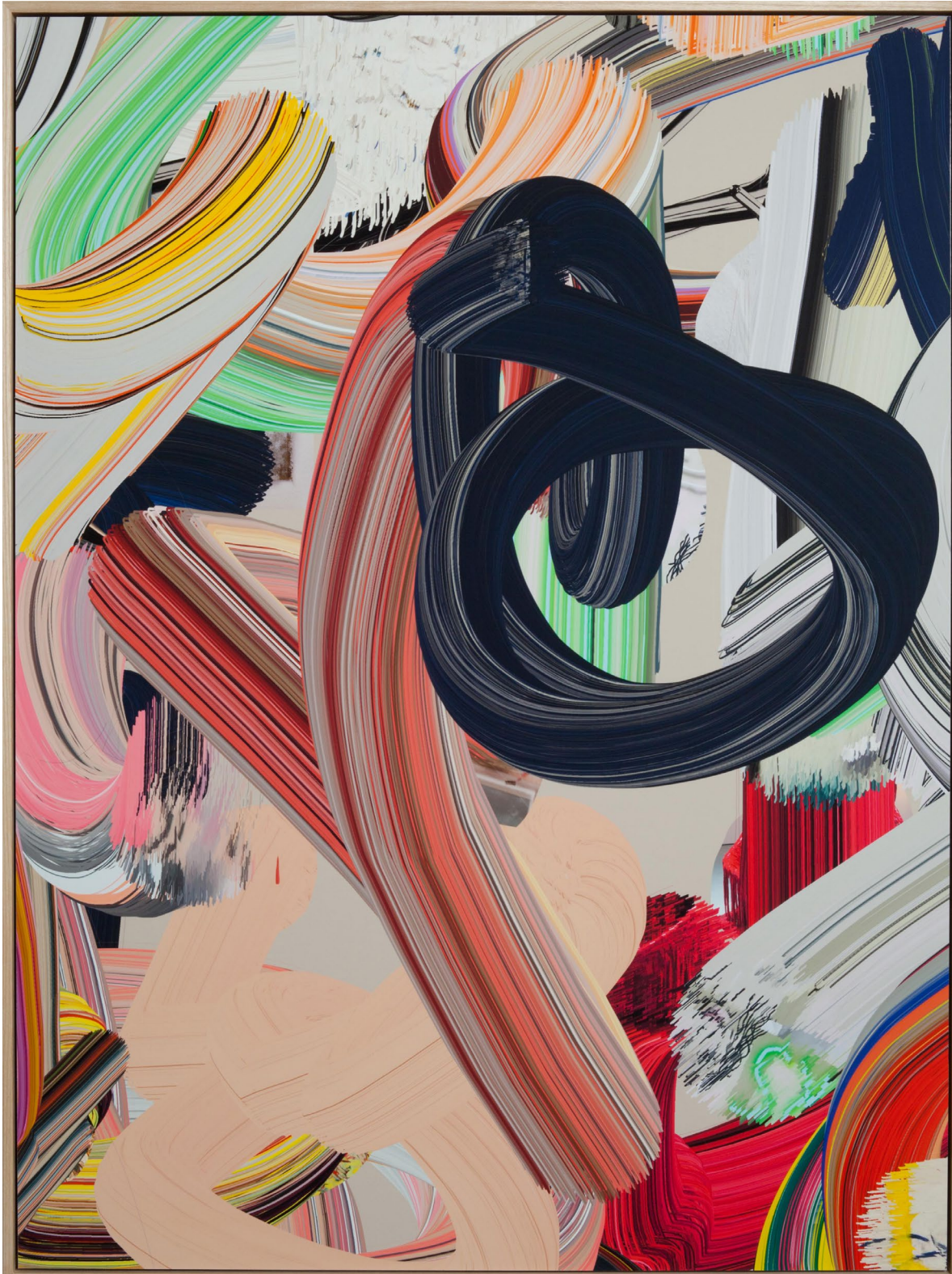
Perihelion Series #5

2018

acrylic pigment based ink printed on Hahnemuhle paper
mounted on a lightweight aluminium plate

67 x 50 cm

26.5 x 20 in



Otto Ford

Perihelion Series #4

2018

acrylic pigment based ink printed on Hahnemuhle paper
mounted on a lightweight aluminium plate

67 x 50 cm

26.5 x 20 in





Otto Ford
Dionysus Eats
2021

acrylic pigment based ink printed on Hahnemuhle paper
mounted on a light weight aluminium plate

100 x 75 cm
39 x 29.5 in



Otto Ford

The paintings of **Otto Ford** are born out of a singular combination: while Ford earned his BA from Goldsmiths and completed his MA at the Royal College of Arts in London in 2017, he has also pursued studies in the field of technology. With these specific set of skills, the artist creates digital paintings in which 'paint' is data, that is, from digital reproductions of art history subjects to NASA pictures of the space, among an uncountable number of other references, he bundles the radiance of these images into a brushstroke, creating a peculiar tone coming to a distinctive visual result. Later, he generates a dynamic game of forms using that data, now coagulated in a digital brush.

When the work is completed, it is printed with acrylic pigment-based ink on Hahnemühle paper, mounted on aluminum, and framed. A process that can take weeks, when considering all its stages.

Otto Ford was born in 1978, and lives and works currently in Brighton. He received the HIX Award in 2017.



Otto Ford

Geoponika

FEBRUARY 13 - MARCH 20, 2021

Otto Ford creates expressive abstract paintings concerned with the relationship between the digital and material world. Using a wide range of digital collage, software and print technology, he creates works of intense colour, texture and depth of field, continuing to challenge our idea of what makes a painting. Ford's second exhibition in Berlin presents new digital paintings which are inspired by a book the artist was reading at the time of the works' creation. Encyclopaedic in nature, the *Geoponika* is a Byzantine Greek farming manual which was composed of instructive, scientific, superstitious and humorous texts in the 10th century AD. In *Pleiades Return*, Ford conjures up abstract images of colourful sky formations inspired by ancient rituals still practiced today, that use star mapping to predict farming conditions. Also, *Dionysus Eats* and *Euphorbia Rising*, titled after the god of vine and a flowering plant respectively, allude to nature and farming through their tones and captions, thereby reiterating the etymological roots of the word culture in the Latin *colere*, meaning to till, to form, to cultivate.

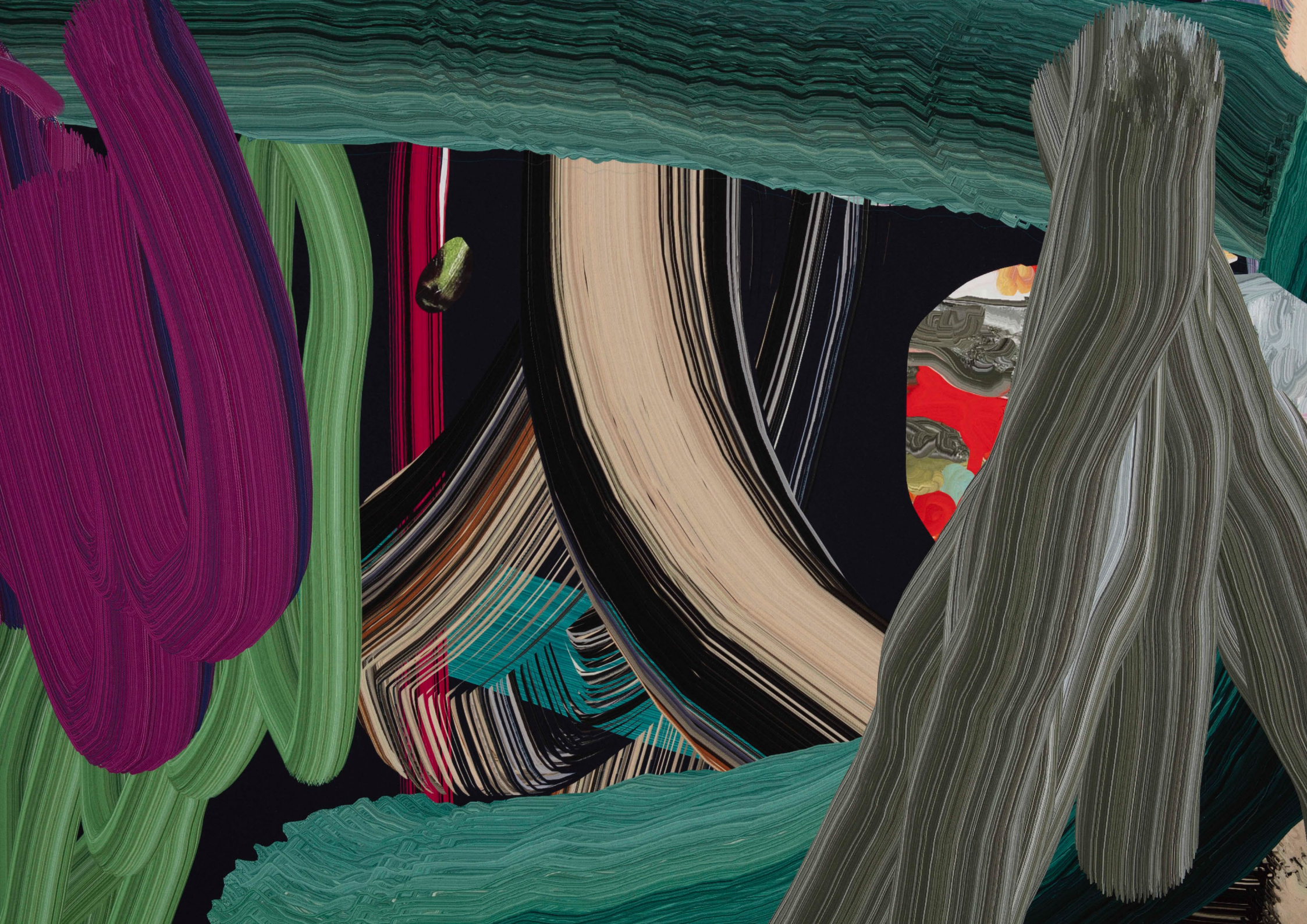
An interesting new point of departure in Ford's work is presented in *Mintaka Starmap*, for it is one of his first paintings which is not format-filling and evokes the contours of Marshall Islands stick charts. Used as a memory and orientation aid by navigators to prepare for sea voyages in the Pacific Ocean, these charts were mobile sculptural forms built from a latticework of leaf ribs and shells. The brushstrokes interspersed with green, yellow and red tones and the in-between areas, which were left or deliberately made white, seem to imitate these structures while leaving ample room for further interpretations. Through *Geoponika* as a lens that is both historical and contemporary, Ford enables us to reassess our interactions with the environment and our approach to the living, technical and artistic world.

by Marie Meyering



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Otto Ford

Collider

OCTOBER 26 - DECEMBER 30, 2018

To Otto Ford (b. 1978) it became increasingly clear that nothing new was happening in contemporary painting, in fact that nothing new had happened for a long time. In the canvases of recent years he saw painters merely repeating styles and returning again and again to the aesthetics and techniques of the past. But nevertheless, motivated by his undying fascination with painting and the possibilities of its visual language, he began making studies on the essential nature of pictures in general.

Through this intense period of 'field research' there crystalized in Ford's mind an idea of finding a new pictorial language – one of his own. Against this backdrop, he collects pictures of every kind, specifically details from them: vividly painterly effects of colour, which he likes to call 'anomalies'. From this eclectic archive of abstractions culled from source images, Ford ultimately assembles a selection to form a 'brushstroke' – a colourful, digital brushstroke – that then serves as the basis for his intensely colour-rich paintings. In his efforts to rethink the language of painting, he draws not just from the canon of painting, but from the many possibilities opened up by digital technology and thus feeds the long-since commonplace new media into the generative act of painting. For the underlying question that drives Ford and, indeed, all artists as they strive to revolutionize their chosen art form is: what else can painting be?

And yet, when looking at Ford's paintings, it may initially seem perfectly justifiable to ask oneself whether it is apt to call them 'paintings' in the first place. After all, one could see them as mere print-offs of computer-generated daubs and splatterings of paint.

But does painting really always have to consist of paint applied to canvas? Be it painting with lacquer, a spatula instead of a brush, or applying solid materials, even objects to a support – within the art form itself there are already countless variations that deviate from the norm of paint + canvas. What the various forms of painting have in common, however, is that they transfer an image, be it a mental one or something seen in the real world, to a new (two-dimensional) medium. These are exactly the same lines of inquiry that Ford pursues in his art. In his digital approach, he applies the same defining gesture of the brushstroke that shapes our understanding of painting in general, only this time the materials are different, are new. At the end of the day, the result is a real, physical object that is the same as a classical painting. In this way Ford toys with and subverts our habitual modes of seeing and understanding painting. In an almost perfect illusion, he creates something that has the same visual impact as paint, but is not paint. Ultimately, in tackling the question of how to revive painting, Ford adopts an approach that is as conceptual as much as it is aesthetic – and is completely new.

In addition, by working with the computer, Ford is able to meld visual material of the most disparate kinds into one and the same image. Be they photographs, amateur snapshots, other paintings and works of art, found objects or self-made objects – in Ford's paintings the extracted and abstracted bursts of colour combine to form composites that encompass several dimensions at once, not just the painterly, for this is where various times, spaces, and materials collide, overlap, or bleed into each other. So, lurking in the picture one might find a fragment of a NASA image of space nestling beside a golden, faded snippet from Van Gogh's *Night Café*. Mostly, however, the original sources of the colours are camouflaged by their abstraction. In this, Ford reflects something of his view of the world, which he sees as abstract in the first place. Just like the assemblage of hundreds of culled fragments in his works, our life on earth can never be comprehended in all its parts. Any attempt to grasp the whole results in it bursting into a firework of innumerable and indefinable specks of light. Each of Ford's works thus creates its own small cosmos. They are worlds out of pictures, pictures out of our world.

by Klara Niemann



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Otto Ford

Solo & Group Exhibitions

2021

Geoponika

GNYP Gallery, Berlin (Germany)

2019

POST ANALOG STUDIO

The Hole, New York (USA)

2018

Collider

GNYP Gallery, Berlin (Germany)

Natur Blick

Koppel Project, London (UK)

Picasso Baby

The Dot Project, London (UK)

Group Show

Coutts Bank, London (UK)

2017

HIX Award 2017

London (UK)

Make Shift

Collyer Bristow Gallery, London (UK)

Sculpture Show

Camden Arts Centre, London (UK)

MA Degree Show

Royal College of Art, London (UK)

Ascend, Group Show

Royal College of Art, London (UK)



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