

# TIBOR DE NAGY

11 Rivington St New York NY 10002 212 262 5050 info@tibordenagy.com

## Colter Jacobsen

### *Airwaves for the Eye*

September 10 to October 15, 2022



Colter Jacobsen *Ear In*, 2022 watercolor on paper

*On my return from travel, I was roused to a consideration of subjects which I had previously never dreamed of, or thought about, connected with self; and I had such ideas that, had I spoken of them openly, I must, if answered in the world's fashion, have been told I was unreasonable.*

--Richard Dadd

Colter Jacobsen's recent work overlays mind and matter, imagination and nature, simile and substance. The interrogative is his central theme. We see it not only in the form of a question mark that rhymes--here with a bent over tree, there with the shape of an ear--but also in the underlying slipperiness of his images and forms. We are left, time after time, with the question, "What is it?" The closer we look, the less obvious the answer becomes. What we thought was a leafless oak appears, on closer inspection to be no more than a random arrangement of lines, based on the material of the paper itself and which resemble nothing so much as the squiggly patterns that float across the inside of your lids when you shut your eyes and squeeze. The curlicue branch of a manzanita tree, curiously forming the shape of an ear, is remarkable enough until you see the quick brown fox hidden between its folds. There is a small painting that we might be inclined to call "abstract"—only

for lack of words to describe what it is. Even as Jacobsen reaches out a finger to brush the electric surface of the real, his imagery often remains rooted in the domestic and nearby. The trees grow at his Mendocino home, his memory drawing of a plantlike fossil is based on a stone he found in a nearby stream.

Jacobsen's art holds a network of associations. Not only within and across his own works--images finding images, echoing and amplifying in strange harmonics--but also to the broader culture. His painting of the twisted manzanita branch was made to fit in a specific frame carved by the artist Jess which, with its sinuous, art nouveau curves, effortlessly called forth Jacobsen's Ovidian wonderworld. The large oak tree, with branches spread like ganglia was inspired by the work of the Spanish neuroscientist Santiago Ramón y Cajal, especially his astonishing drawings of the cells of the brain. Other works converse with the poets Bernadette Mayer, Jason Morris, and Ulalume González de León; artists Kori Girard and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, the band Big Thief; essayist David George Haskell; and jazz musician Don Cherry.

Jacobsen loves puzzles—because we live in one it seems—and so he creates mirror images, double-entendres, palindromes, pareidolia, and puns. He unlocks the words within words, resurrecting the residues of etymology and sound. The title Jacobsen chose for the exhibition, *Airwaves for the Eye*, derives from a Don Cherry song, *Moving Pictures for the Ear*, and holds the kind of generative contradiction embodied in his art. There is, too, an homage in the title to both Jack Spicer, whose poems came to him on radio waves from the stars and to the anthropologist and polymath, Jaime de Angulo who included the line, "Singing with my antenna," in his poem *For You*. *Airwaves for the Eye* captures succinctly the focus and slippage that comes with all of Jacobsen's works. Sensation yes, but with signals crossed. And on channels that are invisible until we give them our undivided, unfocused attention.

-- Lawrence Rinder

**Colter Jacobsen** lives in Ukiah and Surprise Valley, California. He publishes the Ukiah Haiku Review and DJs for the show *Nomadic Nightcap* on KZYX. He is currently writing a novel about a leaf-blower operator and the wobble of the Earth. When not making art, you'll find him walking two dogs, not walking four cats, collecting eggs from 6 chickens and petting 60,000 bees. In addition to Tibor de Nagy, Jacobsen is represented by Corvi-Mora, London and Anglim/Trimble, San Francisco and is currently showing work in two group shows - *Some Kind of Mind Thing* at Off Paradise in NYC and *Nature/Landscape* at Studio 540 in Cedarville, California.

**Lawrence Rinder** is a writer and curator living in Ukiah and Cedarville, California. In his spare time, he does pro bono work for the DNC and Deep Springs College. He enjoys serving on the boards of Kadist and Creativity Explored.