Matt Connors: Early Works on Paper
October 29 – December 23, 2026

Ortuzar is pleased to announce **"Matt Connors: Early Works on Paper,"** the gallery's second solo exhibition with the New York and Los Angeles based artist.

Bringing together works on paper made between 2001 and 2004, the exhibition offers a view into the development of Connors's formal language. Drawing has long occupied an essential place within Connors's practice, providing a space in which line, color, and composition can be tested, rearranged, and allowed to remain unresolved. Rather than serving as studies for paintings, the drawings exist in a reciprocal relationship with them, allowing ideas to move freely between the two media and resisting any fixed hierarchy. Working across gouache, colored pencil and collage, these early works reveal an artist looking closely at the overlooked visual incidents and objects of everyday life and translating those observations in and out of abstraction.

The works draw from a seemingly disparate field of references: textile design, piles of fabric and clothing, architectural forms, and the saturated color and optical experimentation of historical type and graphic design. Connors moves freely between observation, invention, and omission, allowing ordinary objects to become unstable and associative. Across the drawings, passages of exquisite detail are balanced by a striking restraint, with the worked image often occupying only a fragment of the paper and leaving broad expanses of the sheet untouched. This economy gives even the smallest forms an unusual intensity: contours loosen, surfaces become fields of color and texture, and recognition gives way to a constellation of relationships.

In one work, a form suspended in space gradually takes on the appearance of a skull, as arrangements of line, shape, and negative space slip unexpectedly into representation. Yet the image never fully resolves as such, recalling the tradition of the memento mori while remaining elusive in its meaning. Elsewhere, pattern slips into architecture, fabric becomes landscape, and recognizable forms dissolve into arrangements of color and shape. Translating optical experience into the physical accumulation of marks on paper, the drawings occupy an unstable space between seeing and touching, recognition and abstraction, knowing and not knowing. The closer one looks, the less securely the thing itself can be held in view.

Matt Connors: Early Works on Paper, a catalogue dedicated to this body of works on paper, will be published on the occasion of the exhibition. The publication is designed by Jordan Weitzman of Magic Hour Press.

Matt Connors (b. 1973, Chicago, Illinois) lives and works in New York City. He received a BFA from Bennington College, Vermont (1995) and an MFA from Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut (2006). He curated "Finding Aid,"(2024), an exhibition at Goldsmiths CCA, London featuring his work alongside admired artists. Connors was also included in the Whitney Biennial 2022, "Quiet as It's Kept". Recent solo exhibitions include "Matt Connors: Cooperative Village," Herald Street, Bologna, Italy (2026); "Mysterious Leap," Xavier Hufkens, Brussels, Belgium (2025); "Positions," Ortuzar Projects, New York (2024); Institutional collections include the Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas; Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Buffalo, New York; San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio, Texas; and National Gallery of Art, Canberra, Australia. Connors received a 2012 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, was a 2015 Artist in Residence at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas, and was the recipient of the Award of Merit Medal in Painting at the 2024 American Academy of Arts and Letters Awards.