

FABIAN MARTI

I LÄBE NO

Sept. 6 - Oct. 12, 2019

Galerie Peter Kilchmann is pleased to announce the gallery's fifth solo exhibition *I LÄBE NO* (I am still alive) from Los Angeles-based, Swiss artist, Fabian Marti (*1979 in Fribourg).

It was around 1970 when On Kawara commented on the phrase he famously sent by telegram repeatedly throughout his life from various points around the world:

In a certain sense the phrase "I am still alive" can never be sent as it cannot be received by the addressee instantaneously... It is only valid at the very instant that it is being written, and in the very next second it no longer is a certainty. If the addressee receives the telegram a few hours or days later and reads it, he merely knows that the sender was alive at the very instant the telegram was sent. But when he is reading the telegram, he is totally uncertain if the content of the text is still relevant or if it is still valid. The difference, the small displacement between sending and receiving, is that particular unseizable glimpse of the presence of the artist. Likewise, it is a sentence of self-reassurance..."I am still alive." The activity of telling oneself and the world "I am still alive."

The marking of time, something that has always puzzled us humans, is nestled firmly at the heart of Marti's exhibition *I LÄBE NO*. The show not only represents a new body of work by the artist, encompassing a series of new paintings, an on-going video project and a new chair design, developed especially for this installation at the gallery, but also represents a move towards a decidedly personal approach in Marti's practice.

If we can agree that life is a story, the glaring question remains: how do we tell it? What details do we include (or omit)? How do we decide which model storyline to follow? How do we invent our own rubrics to tell the story of our lives? Where do we draw the line in the narrative between actual events and good storytelling? How do we recognize (and then convey) the milestones of our own narratives?

These are all questions that the new series of paintings (all 2019) seem to conjure in the exhibition. The paintings are uniform in size, and serial in nature, and each radiates with Marti's distinct, signature green. The foundation (or support, if you will) of these green compositions are various close-up photographs of the artist's dog, Lutz. Painted on top of these images of the artist's faithful companion are fragments and impressions taken from Marti's everyday life: places he tends to frequent (*I LÄBE NO (Lutz & The Sunset Tower)*, 2019, *I LÄBE NO (Lutz & Kronenhalle)*, 2019); outtakes of artworks both by himself (*I LÄBE NO (Lutz & The Hanged Man)*, 2019); or works by other artists he admires (*I LÄBE NO (Lutz & Dresseur d'Animaux)*, 2019); meditation mantras (*I LÄBE NO (Lutz & I'm A Good Boy)*, 2019); billboards seen around Los Angeles (*I LÄBE NO (Lutz & Spidey)*, 2019); and sometimes indistinguishable abstraction shapes. These works provide an insight to the way our lives are punctuated by impressions - both significant and banal. The paintings are not necessarily symbolic, but rather intuitive - creating a visual soundtrack for Marti's narration of life.

The new, on-going video project *I.L.N. (Stories 2017-2019)* is the culmination of years of daily posts to Instagram Stories. Similarly to the paintings, this video project picks up and isolates seemingly banal moments in the artist's life. Each short, 15 second, video clip show the artists face, taken in a variety of different places around the world, in different settings. Often you can hear someone talking in the background, either friends or colleagues at dinner, or a podcast over the car stereo. Alone each video fragment isn't much more than a selfie, but the accumulated collection of short videos becomes a meditation on the notion of time. The daily routine becomes significant as if captured in an attempt to slow the passing of time itself. This is complicated by the dates of each video's making, superimposed in the style of On Kawara's date paintings over each 15 second clip in green. Time here is inescapable.

The chairs scattered around the gallery are an original design constructed with the very boards upon which the paintings were created. They all bear traces of the artists studio practice with globs of paint and hand-written calculations or notes. These chairs *FM Studio Chairs*, 2019 populate the room like visitors milling about during a gallery opening. These chairs represent a process, not only in their making, or the making of the paintings, but potentially offer the gallery visitor a chance to sit down, and take a moment to reflect on the passage of time around them.

And in an attempt to thwart the tyranny of time, let us return to the beginning - to the beginning of the exhibition. At the entrance to the gallery, the visitor is greeted by a small, framed photograph of the artist as a child. In his childhood living room, the young Marti is proudly displaying his collection of computer games on floppy discs: each laid out carefully in a grid, as he stands over them with a big grin on his face.

This photograph might seem at first somewhat incongruous with the rest of the exhibition, but it actually offers us a glimpse into the compulsion to accumulate - almost in an attempt to gain oversight, to survey one's own accomplishments. Time keeps on ticking, but it is up to use to find and place the markers along the way. We look back, we look forward, we look into ourselves and we look all around us: in all directions we find stories and traces of ourselves.

(Scott Cameron Weaver)

Since 1999 Marti's works are exhibited in different parts of the world across Europe, America and Asia. A major solo exhibition curated by Fanni Fetzer was presented at Kunstmuseum Lucerne in 2016. In 2015 Catherine Pavlovic curated a solo show at Parc Saint Léger, Pougès. Other important solo exhibitions took place at the Centre Pasquart, Bienne (2013) and Kunstverein Braunschweig (2011). Recent group exhibitions include News, Kunstmuseum Lucerne (2019); Deutsche Bank Lounge Weltwirtschaftsgipfel, Davos (2019); How to see(What isn't there), Collection Burger, Langen Foundation, Neuss, Germany, cur. Gianni Jetzer (2018); Divided We Stand, Busan Biennale, Busan, Korea (2018); Third Presentation, Sammlung Boros (2017); Momente der Auflösung; Museum Marta Herford (2016); Mainzer Ansichten, Kunsthalle Mainz (2015) and Hard Work, Swiss Institute, New York (2015). Marti's participation in the 54th Biennale in Venice, 2011, curated by Bice Curiger, earned the artist international recognition. Marti's works are represented in the collections of the following institutions: Kunstmuseum Lucerne; Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich; Kunsthaus Zurich; Museum MARTa Herford; Parasol Unit Foundation Contemporary Art, London, just to mention a few.

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