

FOUR POSITIONS IN PAINTING**Christoph Hänsli, İhsan Oturmak, Bernd Ribbeck, Melanie Smith**

January 14 – March 12, 2022

Rämistrasse 33

Opening: Friday, January 14, 6 – 8 pm

Galerie Peter Kilchmann is pleased to present the group exhibition *Four Positions in Painting* with Christoph Hänsli (*1963 in Zurich, where he lives and works), İhsan Oturmak (*1987 in Gördük, Diyarbakir; lives and works in Istanbul), Bernd Ribbeck (*1974 in Cologne; lives in Berlin) and Melanie Smith (*1965 in Poole; lives and works in London and Mexico City). Each position will occupy one of the four rooms in our gallery space at Rämistrasse 33 and show new works created between 2020 and 2021. In addition to a new video work by Melanie Smith, the focus of the exhibition lies on painting, which connects and at the same time distances all the presented positions from each other. Precise, elaborate colour surfaces and graphic elements in small-format paintings, as well as an individual, questioning view of reality, are characteristic of all four of them. Yet the artists know how to illuminate the multifaceted potential of painting and the peculiar aesthetics of this timeless medium each from a different angle.

In his figurative painting, **Christoph Hänsli** follows his interest in ephemeral moments and objects of everyday life we give little importance to. Through the detailed depiction of mundane objects, such as tea towels, notepads or a voltage generator, Hänsli portrays the rough edges of an unadorned reality. These are profane objects that are obviously present, but which we tend to repress from our perception or simply forget. By transferring them into the painted image they are charged with new meaning and a symbolic content. In the exhibition, Hänsli presents his new series *Monde perdu*, 2020 (see invitation card), which shows a collection of 19 paper scraps of notes the artist picked up in various sites, such as the street, public places or the supermarket. Each of the small-format paintings shows its subject on a scale of 1:1 to the actual piece of paper. The individual scraps of notes reveal words, letters, numbers, sentence fragments or excerpts from drawings taken out of context, which only vaguely reveal something about the message of the original piece of paper. In connection with another series in which he painted rusty screws, Hänsli once said he was fascinated by the fact that every screw which fell off was somehow missing. In a similar way, the remains of notes leave a gap while they become an enigmatic mosaic piece of their creator.

Christoph Hänsli's work has been shown in solo and group exhibitions since 1989. Past exhibitions have been presented in the following institutions, among others: Kunst(Zeug)Haus, Rapperswil (2021); Villa Renata, Basel (2020); Last Tango, Zurich (2019); Galerie Judin, Berlin (2018); Grand Palais, Bern (2016) and Helmhaus, Zurich (2012).

İhsan Oturmak's works are closely interwoven with his own story and the impressions of his childhood and youth, which he spent in South-Eastern Anatolia in Turkey. With illustrative skilfulness, he portrays the conflict of identity and class within a Turkish society that was characteristic of his environment. The straightforwardness of his painting technique, which renders people and faces as well as objects and vehicles with uninhibited realism, is the anchor for Oturmak's bold engagement with the challenges that define contemporary Turkish society. In the exhibition, Oturmak presents us with a group of paintings from his new series *A normal setback* and *Alternative Resources*. The small-format paintings from *Alternative Resources* show vehicles of the police force and similar instances of protection and safety, such as an ambulance or fire brigade, in front of a house facade or landscape. The outwardly immaculate vehicles seem defunct, as they each have to be pushed by a group of men. In *A normal setback*, the individual vehicles appear severely deformed, as if in a traffic accident. They are set in a deserted, monochrome, dark background. The vehicles point towards a fragility of the otherwise powerful apparatus of political discipline and become metaphors for the undermining of political repression.

Oturmak's works have been exhibited since 2007. Solo and group exhibitions in the past years have been presented at the following institutions, among others: Omm Odunpazarı Modern Museum, Eskişehir (2021); Kunstraum Innsbruck, Innsbruck (2020); Mardin Biennale, Mardin (2018);

Wienwoche, Vienna (2018); Royal Academy of Arts, London (2017); DEPO, Istanbul (2016); Municipal Art Gallery of Mytilene-Halim Bey Mansion, Lesvos (2016); Elgiz Museum, Istanbul (2016); Akbank Art Center, Istanbul (2014); Istanbul Design Biennale (2012) and Espace Culturel Louis Vuitton, Paris (2012).

In the works of **Bernd Ribbeck**, simple geometric shapes such as circles, diamonds, cones and cubes are layered into complex patterns of iconic quality. In order to construct the graphic, abstract elements with the precision that is so characteristic of his work, Ribbeck often combines the two-dimensional application of acrylic paint or gouache and pigments with drawing tools such as pen or pencil. In the exhibition, Ribbeck presents a selection of new paintings and works on paper, which are characterised by a mixture of soft pastel shades and intense luminosity. Painterly sections in colours such as moss green, azure blue and coral red are given an architectural structure with perspectival depth. Approaches from earlier works, such as the exploration of the circle as a complex, symbolically charged form, are re-examined. Thus, in some works the motif of the circle is incised and combined with beams and pointed pyramids to subvert its intangible infinity. In other works, the cube is shaped into figures of sculptural architecture. Through their serial repetition, the shapes and patterns become an immeasurable, continuous narrative.

Since 2000, Ribbeck's works have been presented in solo and group exhibitions, most recently at Fondazione Filiberto e Bianca Menna, Rome (2021); McClelland Sculpture Parc and Gallery, Melbourne; Augsburger Kunstverein, Augsburg (both 2019); Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich and Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen (both 2016). Three solo exhibitions by Ribbeck have already been shown at the gallery (2015, 2012, 2009).

Since the beginning of her career, **Melanie Smith's** artistic practice has manifested itself in various forms of expression such as video installation, painting, collage, sculpture and performance, which all complement each other like a web of references. The film *Fifteen Minutes of Sublime Meditation* was conceived during a creative phase marked by COVID-19 in search of a meaning in our pandemic-shaken present. In a 15-minute sequence of archive footage and clips, a poetic-psychedelic portrait is drawn of our current living circumstances, which are marked by uncertainty, disorientation and restriction. The individual shots jump at a breath-taking pace between micro and macro levels, showing figurative elements such as people, landscape lines and sea creatures, which then are overlaid with virtually created statistics, mathematical sketches and abstracted detail shots from natural environments. Planets and the sun, the ecology, the body, the economy, capital and resources seem to saturate each other until all elements overflow. It is a constant play with perception, irrationality and chaos, with which the artist reproduces not least the visual regime of networks and the digital world, which has gained even more weight through the pandemic. The group of paintings in a small, almost square format takes up the narratives of the film and continues them under the title *Psychoactive Render*. Each work depicts an abstract flow of lively brushstrokes that pour out across the surface of the painting like cosmic rays of brilliant colour. While fast, digital scenes flood us in the film, there is a deceleration of speed and calmness to be found in the painted compositions.

Melanie Smith's work is represented in the collections of international institutions worldwide, including the ETH Graphic Collection, Zurich; MoMA Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; British Council, London; Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami; MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona; Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City; and Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich, among others. Solo exhibitions have been presented most recently at MARCO Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Mexico (2020); Parc Saint Léger, Pougues-les-Eaux, France; MUAC, Mexico City; Museo Amparo, Puebla, Mexico (all 2019); MACBA, Barcelona (2018); Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam and Milton Keynes Gallery, Milton Keynes (both in 2014). Major group exhibitions include the Liverpool Biennale 2018 and Venice Biennale 2011. Solo presentations at the gallery have been presented in 2018, 2012 and 2008.

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