

## **Taarasti Summer Exhibition BERLIINI >>> NASTOLA**

### **Short introduction texts of the participating artists:**

#### **Janne Räisänen**

A mist of powdery pastel colours extends across the canvas, here and there concretizing into lightly scrawled drawings: a man, a face, a house... (sometimes merging into outlandish chimera). Most notable about the paintings by Janne Räisänen may be the intuition, that they don't require explanation: We can feel our way through them, simply by engaging with what is there, in front of our eyes. Unlike language, and its word-by-word structure of linear succession, cause and effect, the canvas provides a plane for multiple ideas to manifest simultaneously. Räisänen's pictorial world is gestural and playful, warm and welcoming – embracing the immediate, unadulterated expressiveness of naive forms. It is practices like his that continue and innovate Berlin's long legacy as an epicentre of expressionist and neo-expressionist painting.

#### **Marlena Kudlicka**

Although crafted in glass and steel, Marlena Kudlicka's delicate sculptures seem almost weightless. Against the backdrop of the pearly-white walls of the gallery, they appear like lines, circles and squares drawn directly into space. Three-dimensional space seems to flicker and fold itself back into the flatness of the technical drawing her constructions are based on. Reminiscent of constructivist sculpture of the early 20th century, Kudlicka's compositions recall a moment in our cultural history, when industrial production became the new standard of the modern age. In the ideology of mass reproduction, error and deviation are intolerable. Reality, however - as we all know - is riddled with uncertainty, flaws and coincidence. Marlena Kudlicka's art finds poetry in this paradox.

#### **Paula Döpfner**

Connecting the cool formalism of minimalist sculpture with the emotional charge of dried roses, Paula Döpfner's sculptures have a 'temperature' that gets under your skin. Her cubes and panels – crafted from glass, metal and ice – suspend the ephemeral beauty of flowers in a prolonged moment, that seems to last forever. However, her objects are always precarious, never stable: Even the bullet-proof glass of "Sometimes it gets so hard you see", ridden by a rash of hairline cracks, shows traces of trauma. Döpfner's art plays passion against coldness – detached formalism against titles derived from blues lyrics – in order to address the irreconcilable paradoxes within human existence, of rational thinking and subjective experience.

#### **Björn Dahlem**

Illuminated by light bulbs, Björn Dahlem's intricate constructions seem to be

imbued by a golden glow. While some of them span across entire gallery floors, others present delicate compositions, suggesting clockwork-like, miniature models of the world. Although mainly made from nothing more than wood, glass and mirrors, his sculptures evoke a sense of wonder: the unadulterated curiosity a trip to a science museum or mysterious mathematical models would trigger in a childlike mind. Dahlem's sculptures are inspired by state-of-the-art findings of astronomy, physics and quantum mechanics, but adopt the rhetoric of outdated scientific display models, in order to remind us that our conceptions of the world – always have been and always will be – everything but fixed.

### **Leiko Ikemura**

In the process of dying and drying out, leaves and petals shrink and curl up – taking on strange and new, almost calligraphic shapes. In her still life photographs of floral bouquets, Leiko Ikemura captured a beauty of decay so mundane that it usually goes unnoticed. Enlarged in scale and reduced to shades of black and white, the flowers' fragile, ossified bodies assume the tragic grandeur of a 'memento mori'. The latter, actually, is the title of one of her bronze sculptures: A girl dreaming with her eyes wide open. The side of her body gaps open like a bursting poppy bud, revealing the sculpture's thin shell and hollow interior. Just like aging flowers her body, too, is subject to disintegration. Maybe Ikemura's multi-faceted art can best be described in terms of its porousness: timeless and introverted in its beauty, but also permeated through and through by the impacts of the outside world.

### **Tom Anholt**

Crafted from collaged linen, Tom Anholt's paintings remind of kaleidoscopic, meticulously detailed patchwork quilts. Reading his dense compositions means embarking on a meandering path: Land- and night-time cityscapes, enchanted forests (inhabited by ambiguous characters – are they lurking behind trees, or guiding the way?) and mysterious islands unfurl in front of our eyes. Like maps from the early days of mapmaking, their perspective oscillates between bird's-eye-view-flatness and naïve suggestions of scaling and depth. Far from being planned or pre-conceived, Anholt's compositions take shape according to a 'blind' process of open-ended intuition: His canvases grow patch by patch – allowing for scraps of subconscious memories to spontaneously emerge and congeal into opaque, thick paint, heavy with emotional charge.

### **Thomas Scheibitz**

Red, yellow and blue. Geometric colour fields sharply contoured by black outlines. In Thomas Scheibitz's compositions, things seem – at first glance – as clear as day. Scheibitz's art practice revives a style of painting that holds a special place in art history: Abstraction, a key achievement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century avant-gardes. And yet, there is something off about his works. If they seem to share a family likeness with Piet Mondrian's geometric compositions and the notion of aloof serenity they stood for, Scheibitz's works don't quite

deliver on their promise: Instead of inspiring relaxed contemplation, his glaring reds and yellows evoke, rather, the warning colour codes of urban construction sites. Not quite satisfying our wish for balanced harmony, Scheibitz deliberately leaves things rough around the edges: colour fields remain unfinished, outlines are cracked, drops of paint are seeping over their edges, while voluminous geometrical bodies push against the flatness of the canvas. Capturing the very moment in which order collapses into chaos, Thomas Scheibitz's art contains unruly energy – making it impossible to look the other way.

### **Kirsi Mikkola**

When we rub our eyes – sensory physiology tells us – the pressure of our hands against our eyeballs creates a stimulus so strong that our brain can't help but interpret it: We see patterns, or stars. Kirsi Mikkola's works seem to be evoked by a similarly strong impact. There's a spectacular overflow of unleashed energy in these collages Mikkola refers to as "constructions". Myriads of painted paper strips are aggregated into dense, multi-layered, and highly textured compositions. Each of them testifies to painstaking manual labour, and an unyielding will to materialize a vision (even if it means sticking with one and the same work for years). The results are pulsing with energy – at times making it hard for the eye to focus clearly; at other times rays of vanishing lines pull our gaze right into the heart of the painting. Kirsi Mikkola's idiosyncratic art practice, which sits so uncomfortably in contemporary art – with its trends, hypes, and artist groups – draws its power from occupying an introverted, internal space. From a place, maybe, usually locked away behind closed eyes.

### **Secundino Hernandez**

Secundino Hernandez's abstract paintings bring to mind a long line of avant-gardist and modernist tradition: His playful black lines, dancing across the canvas, are reminiscent of Jean Miro; his scribbles and stains of colour on raw, ungrounded canvas somewhat evocative of Cy Twombly. Then again, in some of his works, multiple, thick layers of oil paint weigh heavy like sediments – throwing us off the track of tracing Hernandez's frame of art historical references. For Hernandez, painting is an intuitive practice: The artist himself describes the surface of the canvas as a space of meditation, or as a playground. This sense of carefree creativity can still be felt in his large-scale canvases, which completely immerse the viewer who steps in front of them. While some of his works are delivered lightly, others are products of highly controlled formal negotiations – executed with surgical precision. Secundino Hernandez's art shows, what abstract painting after a hundred years of abstraction may look like.

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