

Nick Oberthaler

1.

Liminals

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris
2022

2.

Distinct Oscillations II (Version for a private house, Deurle)

House DD, Deurle/Sint-Martens-Latem, Belgium
2020 – 2021

3.

Insert

Exhibition INT'UBAGU of Samuel Richardot (with Clément Rodzielski)
Musée d'art contemporain de la Haute-Vienne, Rochechouart
2020

4.

M_o_b

Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna
2019

5.

Sequel

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg
2019

6.

Set de table

Pierre-Olivier Arnaud & Nick Oberthaler
VIS, Hamburg & NÉON - Espace d'art contemporain, Lyon
2018

7.

Topology

Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zurich
2018

8.

Distinct Oscillations Revisited

A project in collaboration with Wilfrid Almendra
Adelaide, Marseille
2018

9.

Cabrio

Nico Vascellari & Nick Oberthaler
Galerie Emanuel Layr, Rome
2017

10.

Corporate Fatigue

Nelly Haliti, Thomas Julier, Nick Oberthaler, Jochen Schmith, Andrea Winkler
Neuer Kunstverein Wien
2017

11.

Comfortable Cut

Martin van Zomeren, Amsterdam
2017

12.

Art Club #12 / Folies d'hiver

Villa Medici, Académie de France à Rome
2016

13.

Eventuality

Traklhaus, Salzburg
2016

14.

What kind of bird is this?

Laetitia Badaut Haussmann, Nick Oberthaler, Hugo Scibetta
Levy Delval, Brussels
2016

15.

I can see the whole room! ...And there's nobody in it!

Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zurich
2016

16.

Distinct Features of Fast Oscillations in Phasic and Tonic Rapid Eye Movement

Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna
2015

17.

No Subject No Image No Taste No Matter No Grace No Style

Bianca D'Alessandro, Copenhagen
2015

18.

Pièce dérivée

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris
2015

19. & 20.

Black Pages

01-100
FJK3 Raum für zeitgenössische Kunst, Wien
2022

#1-#95

Kunstverein Bielefeld
2021

Nick Oberthaler

Liminals

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris

21 June 2022 - 30 July 2022

First of all, on the surface on which I am going to paint, I draw a rectangle of whatever size I want, which I regard as an open window through which the subject to be painted is seen. — Leon Battista Alberti, De Pictura, 1435

Liminals is an exhibition of new works by Austrian artist Nick Oberthaler exploring the function of abstract paintings as thresholds for new spatial and visual experiences. Hanging low on the wall, the four large-scale works conceived specially for Thaddaeus Ropac Paris Marais will act as windows into shifting visual dimensions of vivid, contrasting hues, while altering the spaces they inhabit. Alongside them, small, postcard-size works will provide a more intimate insight into the artist's process, revealing his instinctual approach to texture and colour. In both a physical and figurative sense, paintings have long been associated with windows, their grid-like architecture serving as a model for the geometric observation of nature that led to the development of perspective during the Renaissance by theoreticians such as Alberti. Oberthaler, in his own visual language which draws on minimalism and geometric abstraction, reinterprets the art historical trope, layering it with a contemporary digital dimension to reflect on the structures that underpin the making and consumption of images today.

The artist uses what he refers to as 'high-pitched colours' in the works on view, his fluorescent yellow and silvery grey giving the paintings a distinctly technological appearance. Alongside them, grounds of ultramarine blue and gestural strokes of terracotta red invoke a palette more commonly found in paintings from the 15th and 16th centuries. Working in layers as one would on computer design software, the artist juxtaposes these colouristic universes, allowing them to clash and work together in turn to provoke viewers into an active contemplation. Across the canvases, precise, geometric shapes seem to provide real-world spatial indications, evoking, as curator Marie de Brugerolle remarks, computer screens, pieces of folded paper and actual windows. The small, pixel-like squares found on the edges of Oberthaler's paintings, in particular, resemble the markers found on design software, which act as handholds, allowing users to orient themselves and retain a sense of scale in the immaterial digital universe. In the exhibition, these geometric forms challenge and perturb vision as much as they structure it, revealing the elemental grid also as a barrier to observation and generating a loss of scale that is at once disorienting and freeing.

In 2019, Oberthaler began making smaller works, which he sent to friends, artists and collectors as 'SOS postcards' with no writing on the back but the date on which they were made. They became what he calls 'travelling paintings', evoking the precedent of Marcel Duchamp's Box in a Valise (1935–41) in which he carried miniatures of his works, as well as the postal art of the 1960s and 1970s, when artists would send ideas and artworks as a way to avoid censorship and circumvent the rigid structures of the art world. 'On the one hand these could be ideas for not yet realised works,' says Oberthaler of his smaller works, 'on the other, they could be seen as zoom-ins or outs: windows offering a view onto a landscape. In the most reduced sense they are simple paintings, questioning compositional parameters and the interplay of colour on a very small picture plane.'

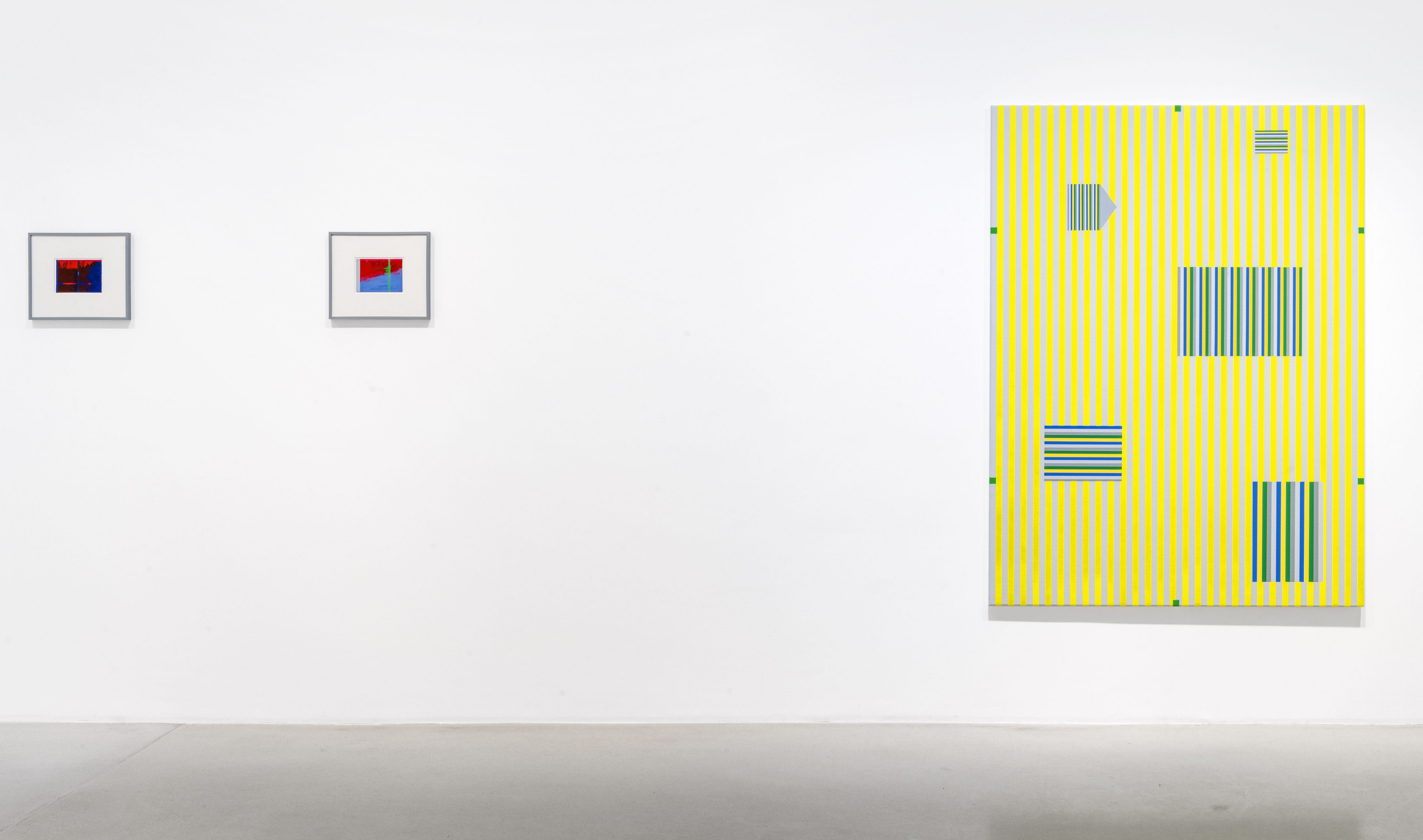
The most graphic among the postcard paintings is made up of bands of colour taken from the Google Maps colour chart of greys, yellows, green and blues. On the top right corner the artist has typeset the letters 'SO', and 'S' on the bottom left. Together forming a call for help, separately the letters act as coordinates 'sud-ouest' (south-west) and 'south', echoing the topographical indications that can be found across the larger works on view and hinting at the landscapes that might lie beyond the window-like canvases. A scientific approach to image-making has fostered the idea of verisimilitude in art since the Renaissance, where the painting acts as a window to a new visual dimension that is nonetheless real. Such an approach continues to influence the way we consume images, particularly those produced by technology, which still lay claim to the objectivity of science. In Liminals Oberthaler reveals paintings as moving planes of colour and form that – more than portals into new worlds – are spaces of invention, unstable and unconstrained, poised on the edges of reality.



Untitled (Liminal Landscape #1), 2022

Acrylics on paper

14,8 x 10,5 cm



Installation view

Liminals
Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris
2022



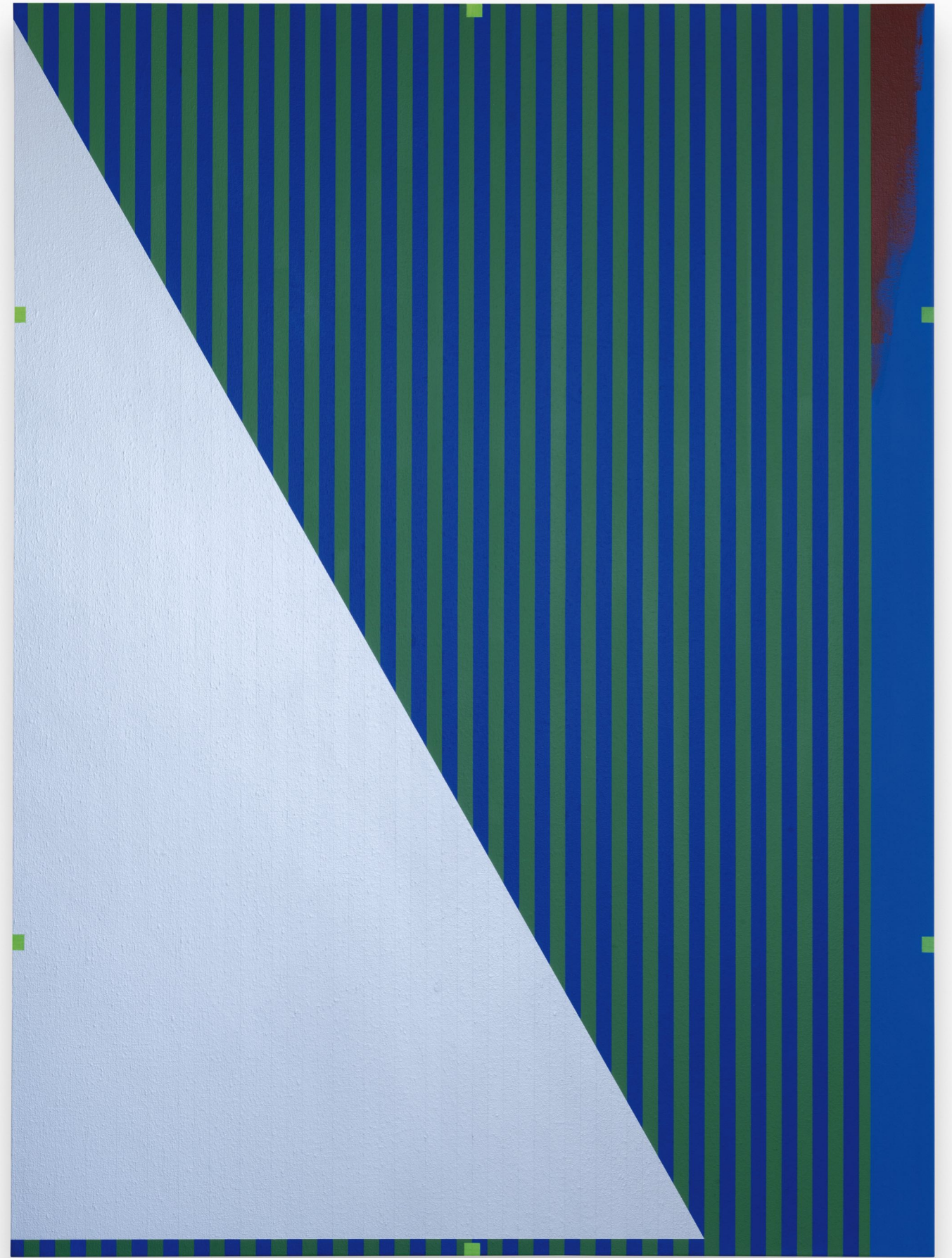
Installation view

Liminals

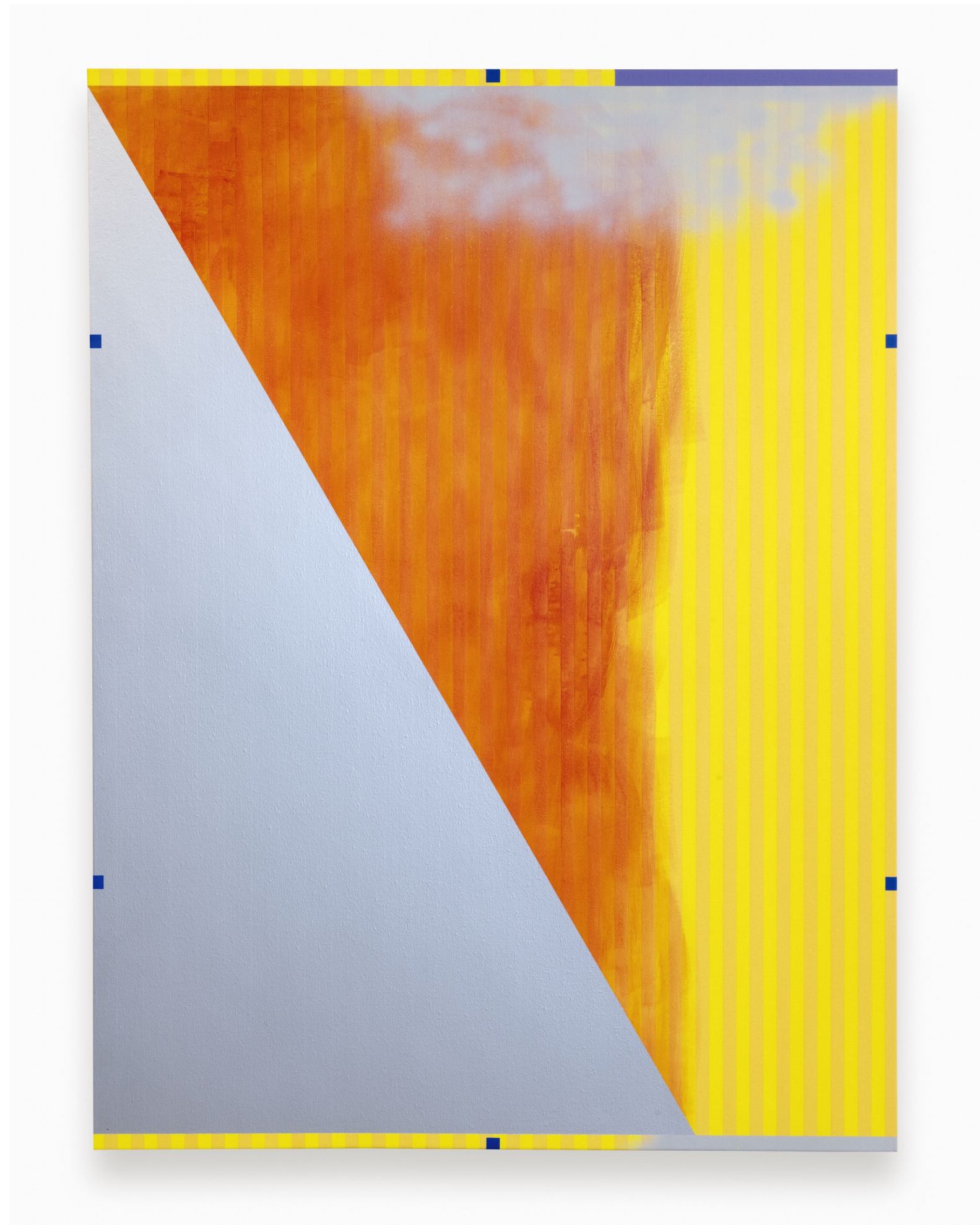
Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris

2022

Untitled (Liminal #1), 2022
Acrylics on canvas
160 x 120 cm



Untitled (Liminal #2), 2022
Acrylics on canvas
160 x 120 cm



Nick Oberthaler

Distinct Oscillations II (Version for a private house, Deurle)
2020 – 2021

Design and conception for a silk-woven tapestry for a private dining room
in collaboration with Wim Goes Architectuur, Gent
House DD, Deurle/Sint-Martens-Latem, Belgium

Production assistant: Lisa Baerschneider, Antwerp
Architect: Wim Goes, Gent
Manufacturer of tapestry: Manufacture Prella, Lyon





Installation view

Distinct Oscillations II (Version for a private house, Deurle)

House DD, Deurle/Sint-Martens-Latem, Belgium

2020 – 2021

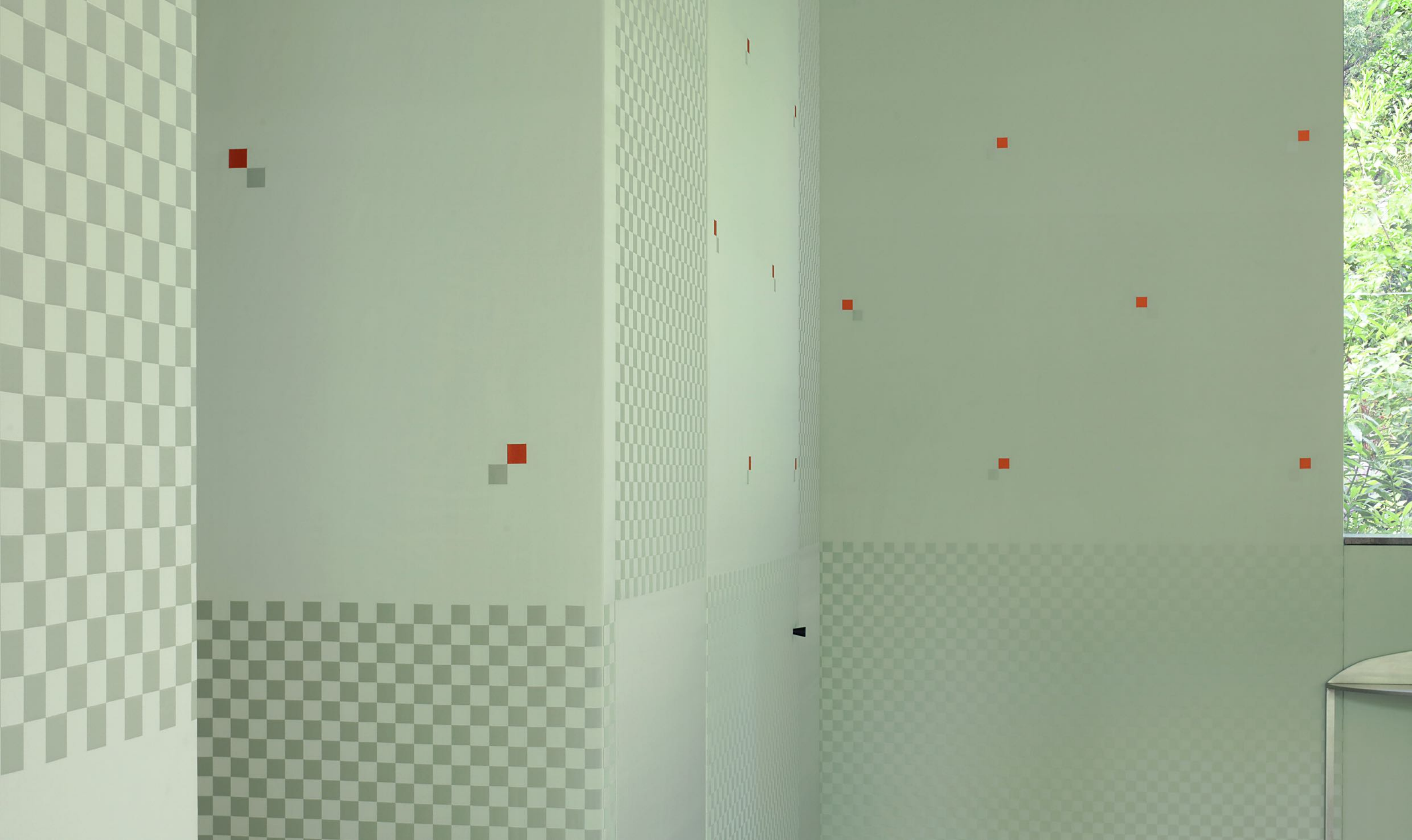


Installation view

Distinct Oscillations II (Version for a private house, Deurle)

House DD, Deurle/Sint-Martens-Latem, Belgium

2020 – 2021



Installation view

Distinct Oscillations II (Version for a private house, Deurle)

House DD, Deurle/Sint-Martens-Latem, Belgium

2020 – 2021

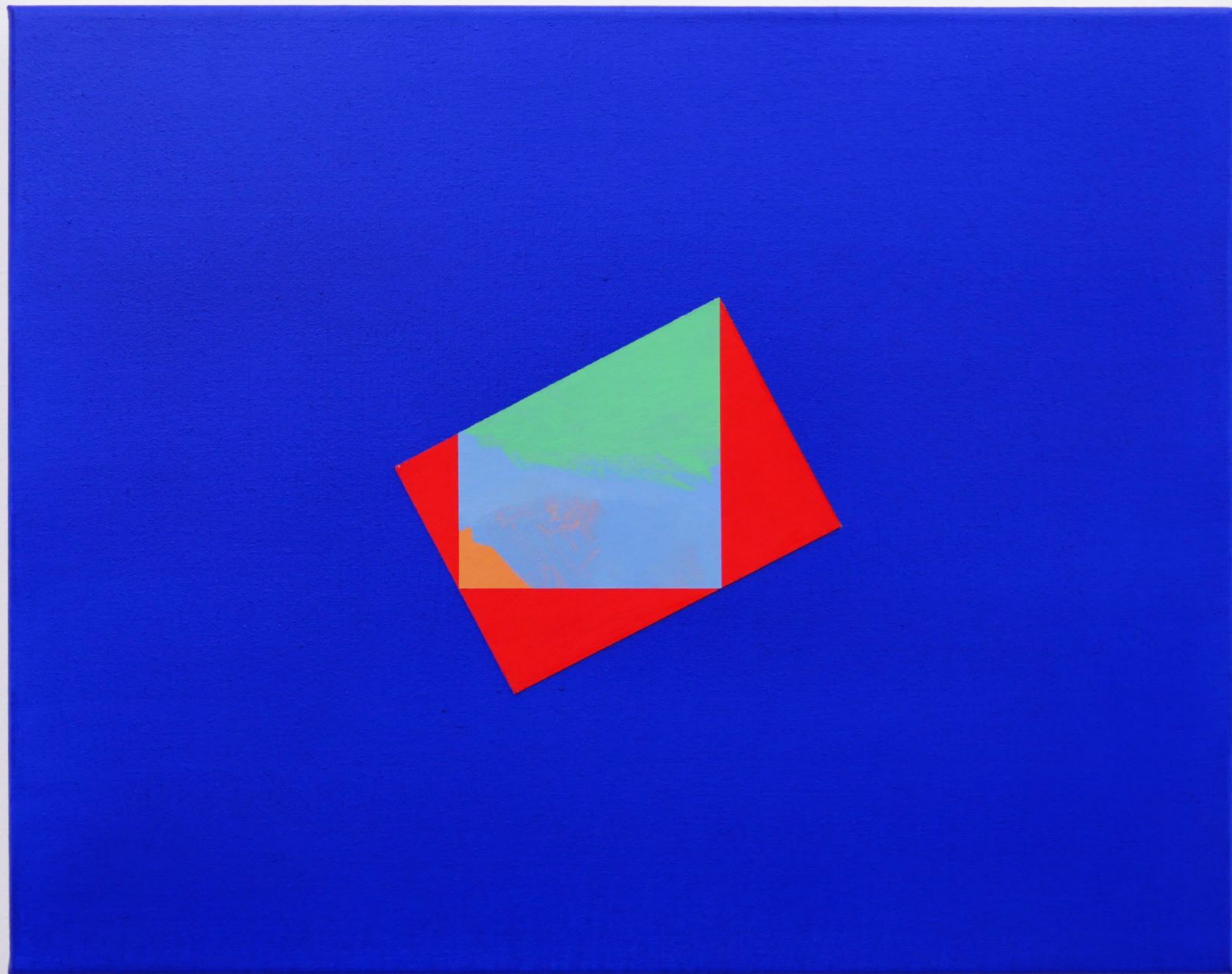
Installation view

Series of paintings (insert in the exhibition INT'UBAGU / Samuel Richardot)

Musée d'art contemporain de la Haute-Vienne, Rochechouart

2020





Untitled (Open #2), 2020
Acrylics on paper on canvas
50 x 40 cm



Untitled (Open #3), 2020
Acrylics on paper on canvas
50 x 40 cm



Untitled (Open #8), 2021
Acrylics on paper on canvas
50 x 40 cm

Nick Oberthaler
M_o_b

Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna
26 June 2019 - 7 September 2019

SOME NOTES ABOUT M_O_B

“Mobile” is the name of an important book written in 1962 by Michel Butor, a major writer of the Nouveau Roman, which breaks the rules of the romantic novel. “Mobile” maps the United States of America though a car journey. Collecting elements of American culture: flyers from hotels, diners, and bird names, Butor assigns each state by the brandnames of its gas stations: Mobile, Exxon, Shell...and through this constant movement across invisible borders, fake lines on an invented map, Butor reinvents a story of migration. In constant movement, like a concrete poem using natural facts as events, “Mobile” creates a new geography of mundane life. It also deals with old stories, the Salem witch trials, sun-down towns, the reverse of the ideal postcard.

What could a contemporary landscape look like? What form does the postcard take today? Instant visions through iPhones, Macbooks, iPads, the new birdsongs are Tweets, Google colors supply our daily palette....

By drawing an oblique line on his canvases, Nick Oberthaler twists the orthogonal structure. While the axis of the world is shifting, the one on the canvas is moving. Under the colorful pattern, there is a construction. This is an operational structure, in movement. It reflects the structure of the world, of our world, of a dysfunctional Europe looking for direction. The squares create a chessboard, cut in half into a triangle. Two triangles make a square. A square is a specific kind of rectangle. Like in Flatland, geometric shapes can be metaphors for human conditions. Strident colors, acid lemon, metallic blue, rusty orange, intercut by shiny grey: this is a computer palette applied to canvas. The ensemble makes a stage set, installed on an expanded open grid, which creates its own structure inside the superstructure of the gallery, an open work. Polysemic and polymeric, the work is like a polysphere which can be seen as a group of different moments, fractions of time, as painting is time made into image. This is possible only by moving around in between the pictures, at the pace of bodies. Each painting is a fragment of a whole, and the Movement of Bodies creates a response to the Movement of Borders, we feel it as a question of vision, decision, and taking a stand, choosing your position, here and now. One dice won’t change the randomness of the order, but if we are two, a pair of dice, we can create a new map. As one is foul, two is humanity, we can choose the diagonal and shake the chessboard, move across the borders.

The strangeness of tones, according to Neo-mannerism, reveals the revolutionary capacity of colors, of paint as a joyful flag in the wind. The paint is a “macula”, a spot, as well as the make up. The brush touch gives breath to the flatness and shows how instability can be a vibrant quality.

CRAZY DIAGONAL

It is as if the painting has been folded and unfolded like a page, leaving a mark. The grey part, shiny, with its metallic reflections, creates a distance with the quality of the work itself. Is it “paint”? The dialectic of color/shade nevertheless exposes the plan to a strategy of division. But an “inclusive division” which reveals the ontological ambiguity of painting today. Among the stacks of “things” produced for the art market, standing in front of a painting might be a challenge, against the latest academic, bad, pseudo-“post internet” images. Then the painting might be a flag, but an anarchist one, which is a kind of oxymoron.

MAPPING THE STUDIO

The green cross saying EXIT might be read as an example of Nick Oberthaler’s capacity to translate from one field (flat screens and Indesign or simply the computer keyboard) to the canvas space. Marking a cross is a starting point for preparing a surface, a portion, on the screen. In the history of painting and representation, a portion of nature was a “landscape”. Here, a “land-scope” arises on the surface of the paint.

The cross has the proportion of the kind we see in the viewfinder of a telescope or a rifle sight. Here the abstraction of shapes is a symptom of the pensée sauvage at stake in Oberthaler’s work. S.O., cross, red google map pins, are decoys. They can be seen first as landmarks, but they are much more illusionist than compositional. Non-representational, or beyond the idea of representation, this is not a map, this is a plight. The Frankfurter Rundschau, saved from insolvency in 2013, is one of the few remaining leftist newspapers. On the board, we see first a staircase which can be read as half empty/half full, going upstairs/downstairs. The paper newspapers can be read, folded and carried with us. They are held in our hands and read vertically. Most of the news comes horizontally today, on phones and tactile tools, we swipe images, no folding/unfolding anymore.

The black image background and text under the fluorescent red layer of paint reads: “generation of decay”. In these times of the uberization of work, what “remains”, the slags produced by the division of labor create piles of leftovers. The leftover leftist papers become a pattern and a rebus. Decay is decoy: a fake, flat image, which Nick Oberthaler reuses. He transforms obsolete forms (newspapers, anarchic ideology) by the act of painting, he makes revolutionary tools. Red and black are the colors of revolution. Then the sight, the red google pins, the green cross are motives rather than signs. They are beyond pattern and decoration. They are the clues of the paintings. Nick Oberthaler constructs his paintings in a dialectical way: in the tension between the facts, events and structures. There is no color field in one part and the objects of the world on another level, paint is not a re-presentation of figures, it is figures on the move. They EXIST.

Text: Marie de Brugerolle, 2019



Installation view

M_o_b

Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna

2019



Installation view

M_o_b

Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna

2019



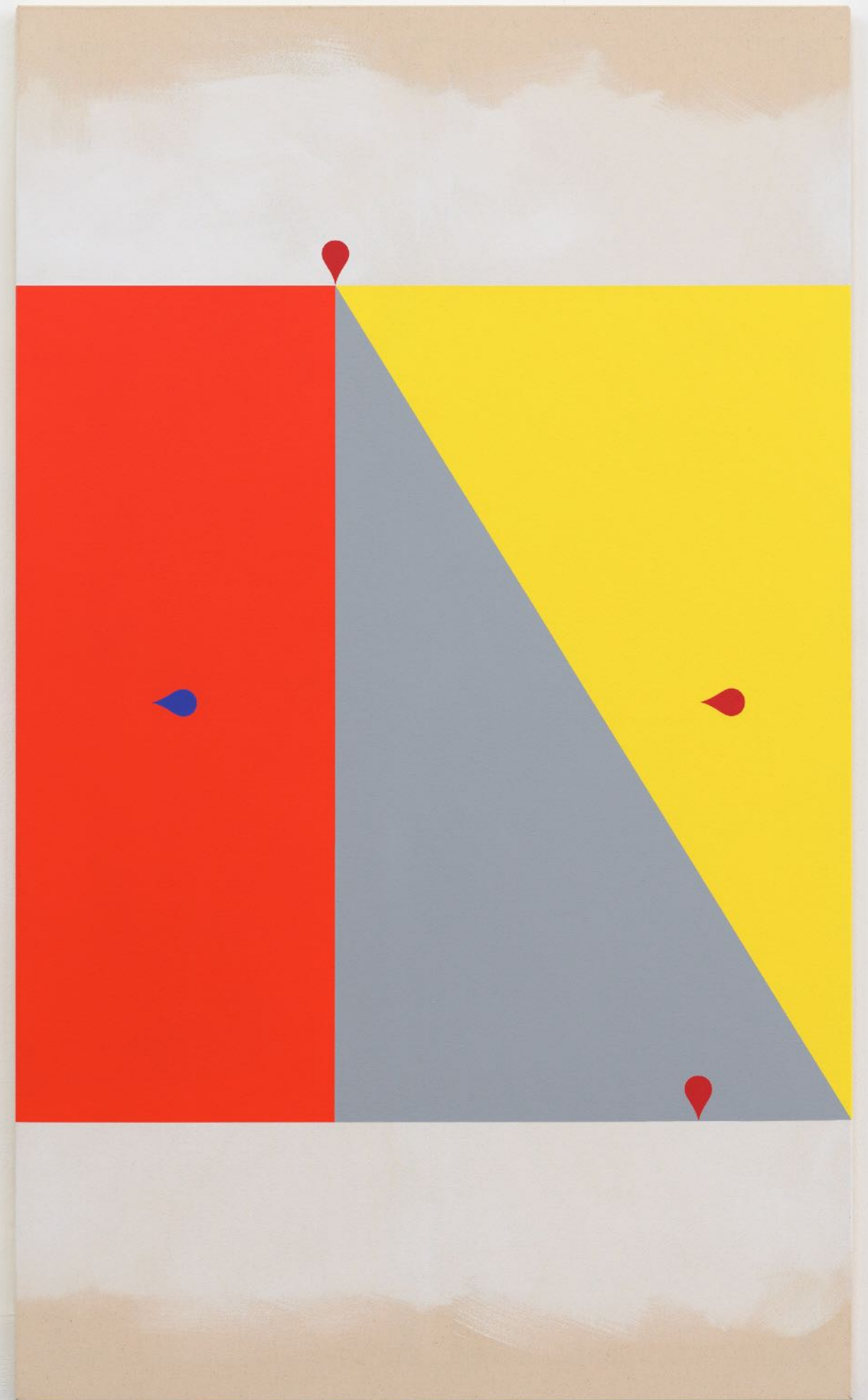
Installation view

M_o_b

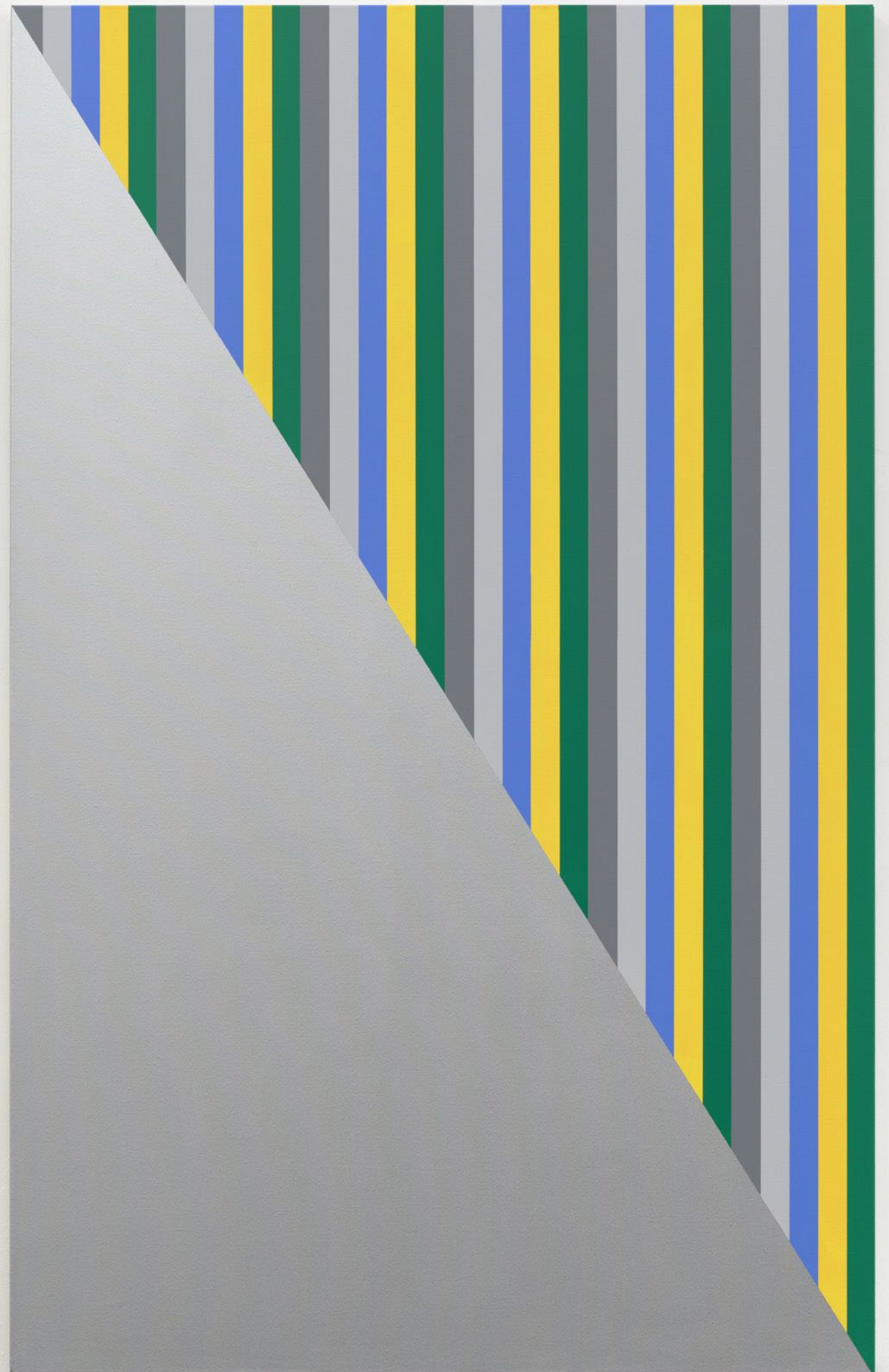
Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna

2019

Untitled (Decoy), 2019
Acrylics on canvas
200 x 120 cm



Untitled (Map), 2019
Acrylics on canvas
200 x 120 cm





Untitled, 2019
Acrylics on paper
41 x 31 cm



Untitled (M_o_b ##), 2019
Acrylics on paper
41 x 31 cm
Series of collaged works (#1-##)

Pierre-Olivier Arnaud & Nick Oberthaler
Set de table

VIS, Hamburg
30 November 2018

NÉON - Espace d'art contemporain, Lyon
12 December 2018

Installation view

Set de table
VIS, Hamburg
2018





Installation view

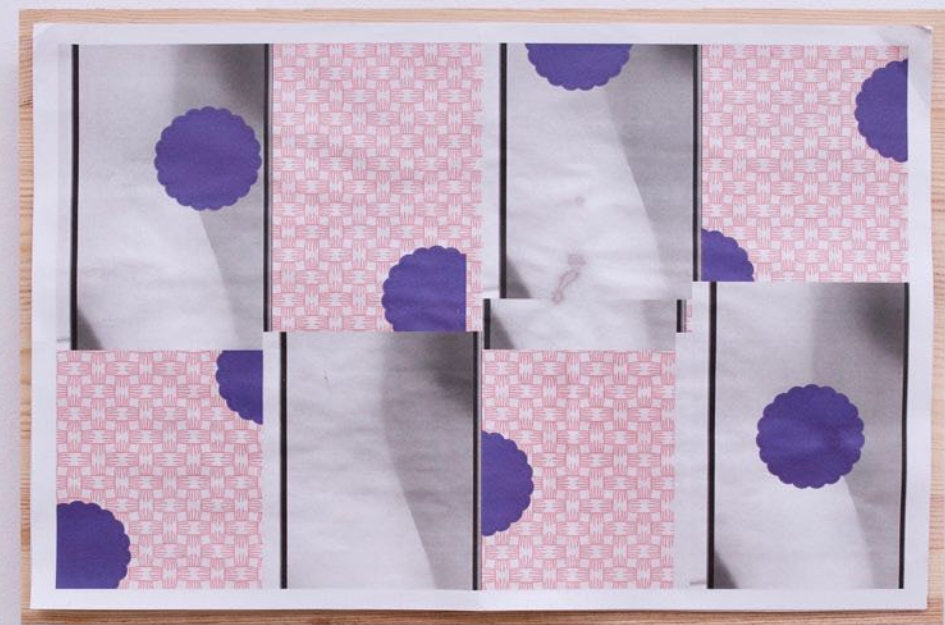
Set de table
VIS, Hamburg
2018



Installation view

Set de table
NÉON, Lyon
2018

Set de table (Pierre-Olivier Arnaud & Nick Oberthaler), 2018
Digital print on newsprint paper, wooden board, screws, folding brackets
approx. 60 x 40 cm



Nick Oberthaler

Topology

Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zurich

2 November 2018 - 22 December 2018

Other Dimensions

The main problem that geometric abstraction must set itself is that of its own historicity. The supply of geometric forms is limited, as are their possible combinations, and thus almost all geometric abstract pictures make reference to other geometric abstract pictures. In the marginal case of monochrome painting, this kind of reference is simply unavoidable. The Austrian painter Nick Oberthaler (b. 1981) is an artist who in recent years has mastered, with bravura, the difficulty of doing something fundamental while knowing it is impossible to do something fundamental without repeating history or fleeing into idiosyncrasy.

For his new exhibition at Maria Bernheim in Zürich, Oberthaler has further intensified his relation to geometric abstract painting. This relation functions on two separate levels.

On the one hand, Oberthaler makes reference to the artists of the 1980s Neo-Geo movement, who consciously wanted their work to be seen to convey meaning. One example would be Peter Halley’s works, which came accompanied by postmodern discourses, and whose exaggerated colorfulness is picked up by Oberthaler.

On the other hand, one can also read Oberthaler’s new works as referring to work, above all that of Günther Förg, which itself refuses any reference to any physical reality. For these artists, as for most postmodern painters, any idea of “an essential reality behind the positive real of things can no longer be rescued, including any notion of showing – even symbolizing – a cosmic, spiritual or neo-Platonic world.”¹ Oberthaler’s works with arrows and points appear to join forces with this postmodern departure from any and all transcendence. These works gesture toward compositional conventions – for example, an emphasis on the center – while suggesting an immanent legibility of images, perhaps even a formal analysis, something almost unknown today. It is impossible to infer references from these works, other than the dynamics and structures of the rectangular, mostly monochrome images. On the other hand, Oberthaler’s new pictures also contain echoes of the aforementioned artists, for whom geometric abstract images still guide the viewer toward meanings, even if no longer metaphysical ones. For example, Oberthaler repeatedly integrates clearly legible letter and word fragments into his paintings, while sometimes also disrupting their legibility, in this way establishing an ingenious interplay between the fragments and the composition as a whole.

Oberthaler’s most complex working through of these interconnected problems can be found in one particular picture: a grid-based image into which four human profiles have been integrated. The grid, of course, along with the monochrome, is the prototypical modern image structure. But as Rosalind Krauss said about the grid: “Structurally, logically, axiomatically, the grid can *only be repeated*.”² In other words, even during modernism, the grid was no longer truly original. In this particular case, Oberthaler’s grid is more closely affiliated to Blinky Palermo’s “Flipper” than to a mature work by Piet Mondrian. The grid’s placement suggests a continuation of the structure beyond the edges of the picture; unlike Mondrian’s work, this is not a self-enclosed structure. The four profiles – abstract, but realistic nonetheless – further extend the interplay between modern and postmodern positions. Of course the profiles disrupt the pure geometry of the grid, but they are so formally integrated that it would be wrong to speak of a clash of styles in a genuinely postmodern sense. Instead, recalling many modernist legitimization strategies, the profiles here seem to allude to the interrelation of abstraction, human beings and society. That Oberthaler uses topology, a spatial concept, as the title of an exhibition of very planar paintings is another hint to us: we should be on the lookout here for dimensions going beyond the purely positivistic.

(Text: Christoph Bruckner, 2018)

1 Johannes Meinhardt, “Säkularisierte Moderne,” in Monochromie Geometrie, ed. Ingvild Goetz, (Munich: Sammlung Goetz, 1996), 7.
2 Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986), 160.



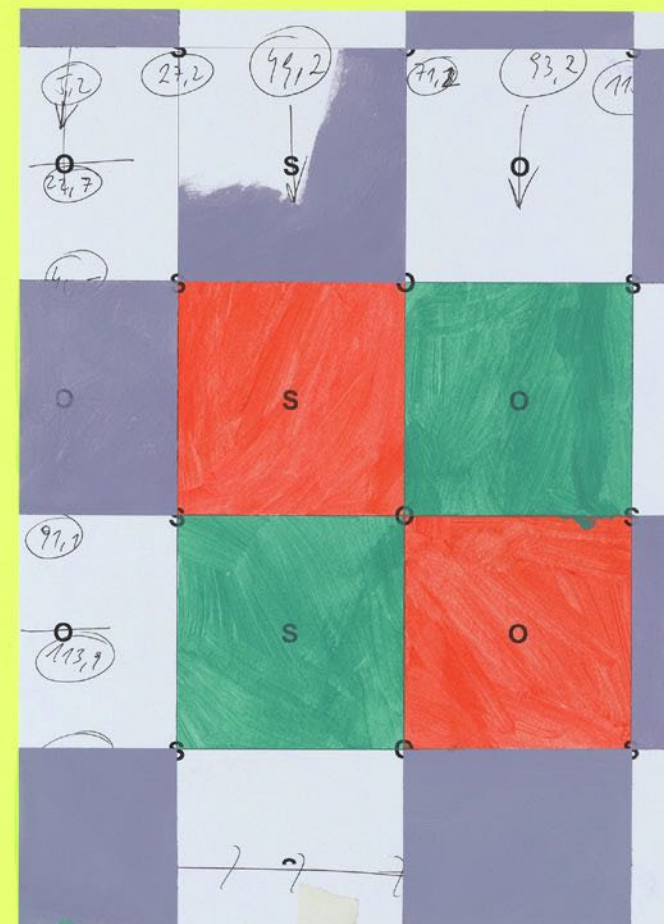
Installation view

Topology

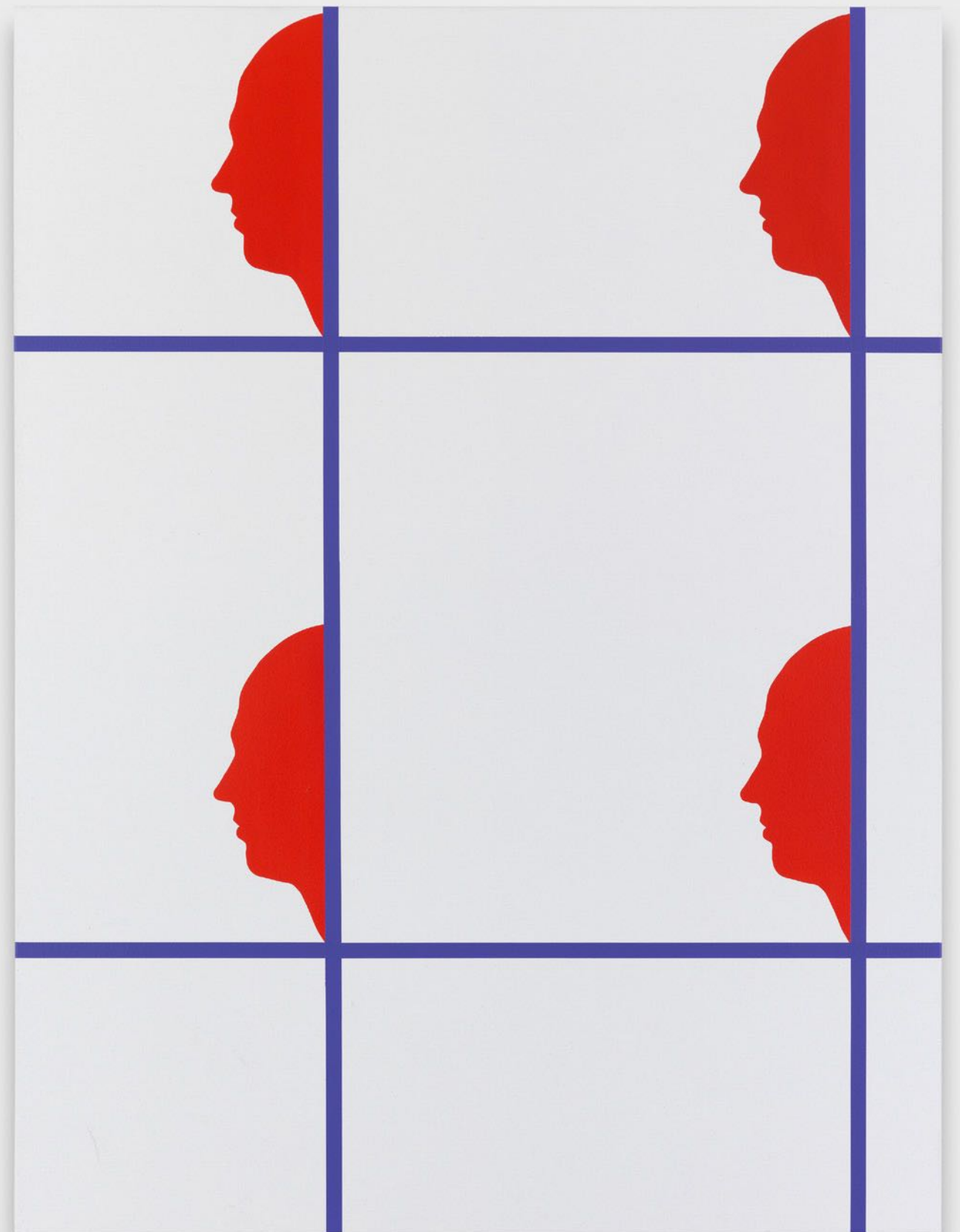
Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zurich

2018

Untitled, 2018
Acrylics on paper on canvas
60 x 40 cm



Untitled (Topology), 2018
Acrylics on canvas
160 x 120 cm



Nick Oberthaler
Distinct Oscillations Revisited
A project in collaboration with Wilfrid Almendra

Adelaide, Marseille
26 January 2018 – 9 February 2018

Nine slabs of lava stone are attached to the facade of Adelaide. They obliterate the vitrine, they make a grid layout of its transparency and make an inversion of a way of seeing things. Duchamp's Large Glass comes to mind as well as baudelairien passages in which the aesthetic of the flâneur is contradicted by the power of a wall/screen.

Dare who pushes the door offers a challenge to the viewer to overturn his or her habits, to enter through the wall and to push it towards the interior.

Inversion might be the Modus Operandi of this proposition by Nick Oberthaler and Wilfrid Almendra, who subvert the conventional process of looking at painting. It is no longer a window upon a fictional world, as Alberti would have it, but rather a shift towards the opacity of drop shadows. The double triangles facing each other make visual signs and spatial reference points. They measure out the space-time of a confrontation. Indeed, the two angles placed end to end by a summit point create multiple visual fields.

Contrary to to one-point renaissance perspective, in this case the vanishing point is both multiple and imaginary. It is one and its mirror, one and its double, one and its shadow. White on a black ground or black on a white ground. It forms a facade as if the double partition made up the manichean solution of a puzzle or of a chess board. The central vertical and the middle horizontal form two crossed axes, while the four squares at the upper left and right and the lower left and right are white. These « bow-tie » motifs could be the simplified forms for an infinity symbol. The ambivalence of these forms originates in their repetition through cutting, stamping and featureless application of paint which systematizes an action: cut, glued, painted. The spray paintings shown inside the gallery are the opposite of the stone facade. Is painting the shadow of sculpture or does it rather underlie sculpture like an outer skin or illusion?

The sculpture of the facade makes a screen, a curtain that one must open in order to peer in.

Nick Oberthaler inscribes an « N.O. » that blocks, cancels and denies the illusion and makes us acknowledge a passage. Painting is no longer what one looks at in passage but what one chooses to cross. It is a threshold, a co-presence in action, in the here and now.

(Text: Marie de Brugerolle, January 2018)

Adelaïde is an artist-run space founded by Franco-portuguese artist Wilfrid Almendra. It is located in the studio of the artist in Marseille.

Adelaïde is a space of exchange and experimentation.
It is a space where tools and ideas are being shared.
It is a space where conversations happen.
It is a space of activity, labor, traffic, and generosity.

Adelaïde is also in direct relation to a project by Wilfrid Almendra, initiated about eight years ago in the small village of Caserio in the Bragança district of northern Portugal. This social, cultural, but also agricultural collaborative project involves international artists as well as artisans, and the local population.





Installation view

Distinct Oscillations Rev.
Adelaide, Marseille
2018



Untitled (Distinct Oscillations Rev. / Marquette France Bleu), 2018
cutouts, marker and ballpoint pen on vinyl banner
80 x 80 cm

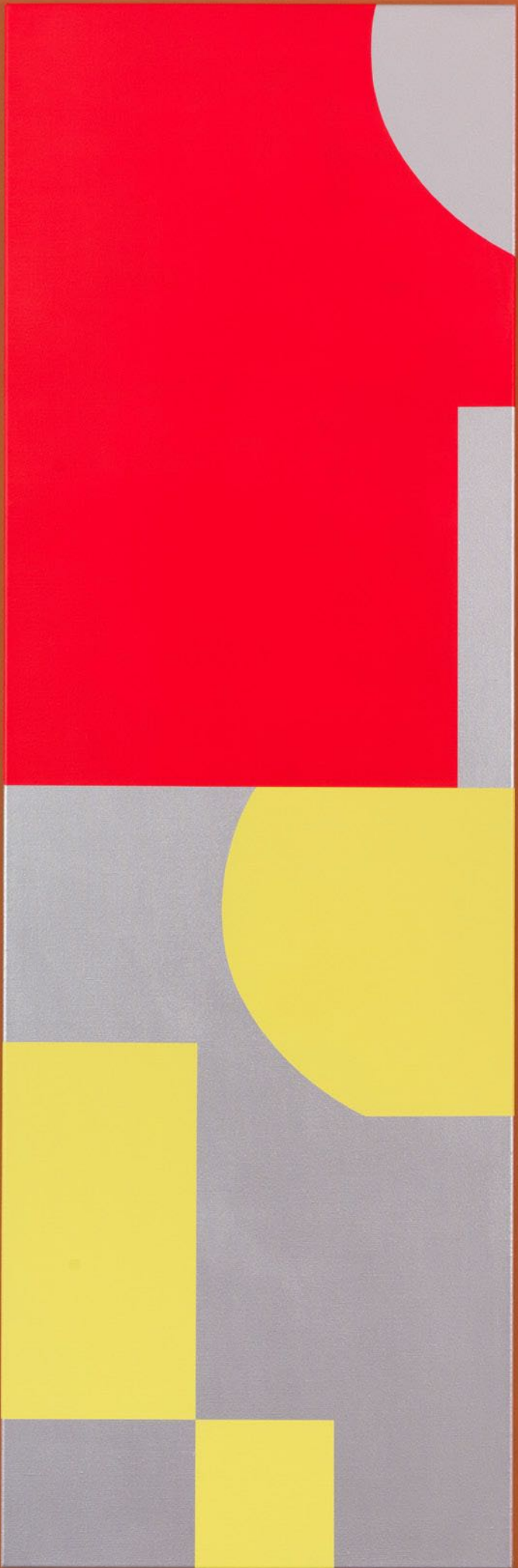
Nick Oberthaler feat. Nico Vascellari
Cabrio

Galerie Emanuel Layr, Rome
17 September 2017 - 11 November 2017

Red, blue, sienna, orange – the pure pigments applied with water onto the walls of the Emanuel Layr gallery by Nick Oberthaler are reminiscent of the backgrounds in Giorgio de Chirico’s Metaphysical paintings. By incorporating the arches of the gallery architecture into this painterly work, the artist has transformed the venue into a theatrical backdrop. And the tribute to the founder of the scuola metafisica is wholly appropriate since de Chirico’s self-portrait hangs in a small chapel, not far from here, in the Church of San Francesco a Ripa, where he is buried. Giorgio de Chirico’s taste for everyday kitsch – the Barbie dolls, the wooden horses and the plastic fruit, which can still be seen in his old studio near the Piazza di Spagna – echoes the mobile phones that Nico Vascellari includes in his paintings. Oberthaler’s well-known butterfly-like, double inverted triangle motifs evoke those of René Daniëls, or his own series of stencilled E’s and X’s. Here, what we have is spray-painted arrows, black on grey. The “push and pull” effect is seen, not only in the motif-to-painting relationship, but, as soon as one enters the gallery, in the walls-to-arches and the curves-to-verticals relationships; it is an exposition mise en scène, a “staged” exhibition. Nick Oberthaler’s paintings invert the form/content question and create confusion because of the equivalent colours he uses, and the balance between motif and surface. Bright reds and saturated greys prevent the eye from settling. They are deceptive, not because they represent an illusion, but because they play a double game. A phenomenon of reversal, like the flip of a coin, comes into play. Nick Oberthaler extrudes, as it were, shapes that might be a painting, a screen, or a mural. He operates in a kind of ambivalence between sign and motif that stems from his constant investigations into the question of fragments, cut-ups and interrupted series. *Cabrio* is a nod towards a car with its roof down, speeding along an Italian road, cleaving through the countryside of a history of painting, from Siena to Florence, and arriving in Rome to find a cell phone with a broken screen on the back seat.

(Text: Marie de Brugerolle, 2017)

Untitled (VdS3), 2017
Gesso and acrylics on canvas/stretchers
185 x 60 cm





Installation view

Cabrio
Galerie Emanuel Layr, Rome
2017



Installation view

Cabrio

Galerie Emanuel Layr, Rome

2017

Corporate Fatigue

Nelly Haliti, Thomas Julier, Nick Oberthaler, Jochen Schmith, Andrea Winkler
(a proposition by Nick Oberthaler)

Neuer Kunstverein Wien
16 November 2017 - 15 Dezember 2017

Creativity, flexibility and initiative have become the basis of a new work/life philosophy. Individual self-actualization has replaced discipline and conformity with the rules. The freedom of one’s own scope of action seems limitless. In fact, it turns out that self-actualization is not just a possibility but a duty, because creative performance is subject to the dictum of economic utilization processes. Since it is necessary to market one’s own personality, appropriation of the individual assumes a new quality. The demand for selfhood increasingly influences the human psyche: permanent flaunting of authentic abilities causes a state of exhaustion that infiltrates and corrupts personal creativity.

Corporate Fatigue detects symptoms of deregulated capital flows, forced identification and signs of overall weariness.

Corporate Fatigue searches for the fragmented self in changing social, cultural, spatial and temporal relationships.

Corporate Fatigue are suspicious artist-subjects and other ruins of constructed individuality.

(Text: Nadine Droste & the artists)

Untitled (Generation Decay), 2016
UV Print and acrylics on canvas/stretchers
200 x 120 cm





Installation view (Nelly Haliti, Andrea Winkler, Nick Oberthaler)

Corporate Fatigue
Neuer Kunstverein Wien
2017

Nick Oberthaler

Comfortable Cut

Martin van Zomeren, Amsterdam

27 May 2017 - 24 June 2017

Abstract Mannerism.

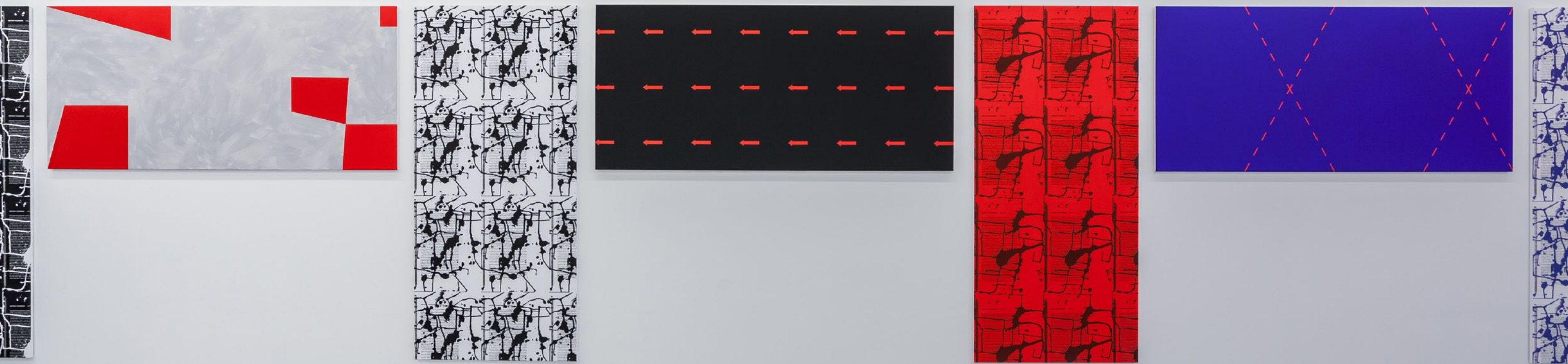
It is difficult to discern which of these two words might be the most beguiling. On the one hand, ‘abstract’ conjures up the mythological and also the historical dimension of painting – from the early 20th century to the present day –, which is so deeply rooted in our daily life that one is almost tempted to think of it as timeless. On the other hand, Mannerism invites us to think about different fashionings and ways of putting things, even about the garrulous nature of the borrowing.

Nick Oberthaler’s paintings interact with their exhibition context as well as with the noble, savage discipline. They come in the form of aluminium mirrors, readymade road-sign motifs. These once-vertical flat surfaces function like human figures dotted around the exhibitions, sometimes giving free rein to slashes and discontinuous lines, directional arrows, and extracts from advertising campaigns, as well as eyes appropriated from Pop – those of Roy Lichtenstein looking through a peephole and seeming to tell us that the space where the exhibition is taking place – i.e. where we are now – is theoretically empty¹. This strictly heterotopic painting now takes the form of landscapes or intra- and extramural refuges. To achieve this, the artist has turned the formats, which are slightly bigger than the average size of a man, through 90 degrees, to create horizontal planes. The sign thus becomes a view, the lines now mark out the reality of the space, the sky becomes heavy and the horizon appears. Nick Oberthaler has developed new imaginary landscapes, a melodic variety of species of spaces. The field becomes coloured, in honour of Barnett Newman. What we have now is neo-Mannerism derived from abstract expressionism. After all, are any of us still afraid of red, yellow and blue?² The colour vibrates, shudders ironically, because our lens is trying to focus on this coloured area, while the lines give clues to a potential update in the focal length, as well as a forthcoming (comfortable) cutting up of the copy. Hence, the painting not only pays heed to its antecedents, which include a succession of colour fields, shapes and other ‘sharp’ canvases, but it also indicates that these ready-to-cut-out filters could be interchangeable. Have you noticed that the colour rendering has been heightened here to refer to existing structures? Oberthaler has simplified the shapes of the gallery background, painting them in two colours. Red and Grey, the drawn and transferred areas refer to the private or unalterable spaces of the architecture of the venue, a pseudo-modernist composition that pragmatically, and playfully subverts the conditions inherent in the emergence of painting, of course, but also in its context. In this new version, the narrative, a posteriori abstraction reflects both the white aquarium and the visitor passing in front of it. This is not the first time that Oberthaler has subverted the context of the white-cube; he had already questioned the role of that second-rate art material, (daylight) neon tubes, by the cunning application of a filter reminiscent of a red-light district. And so, lighting came to punctuate his space much as text runs through the paintings today. This, too, affords breathing space for the gaze and, in the presence of controlled dripping, is an invitation for us to look at an analytical text by Robert Smithson.

Too much Mannerism kills Mannerism, you may be thinking. But that would be to ignore that, as an attitude, it comes across as more concerned with putting people off the scent, and being ironic about an overly serious approach to abstract (art). As our American friend put it, “What is cool today is in a way the rebirth of the Mannerist sensibility”.³

(Text: Arlène Berceliot Courtin, May 2017)

1 Roy Lichtenstein, I Can See the Whole Room...and There’s Nobody in It!, 1961, oil and graphite on canvas, 121 x 121 cm.
2 Barnett Newman, Who’s Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue I, II, III, IV, 1966-1970, acrylics on canvas, unique.
3 Robert Smithson, Abstract Mannerism (1966-1967), in The Collected Writings, Jack Flam, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 339.



Installation view

Comfortable Cut

Martin van Zomeren, Amsterdam

2017



Installation view

Comfortable Cut

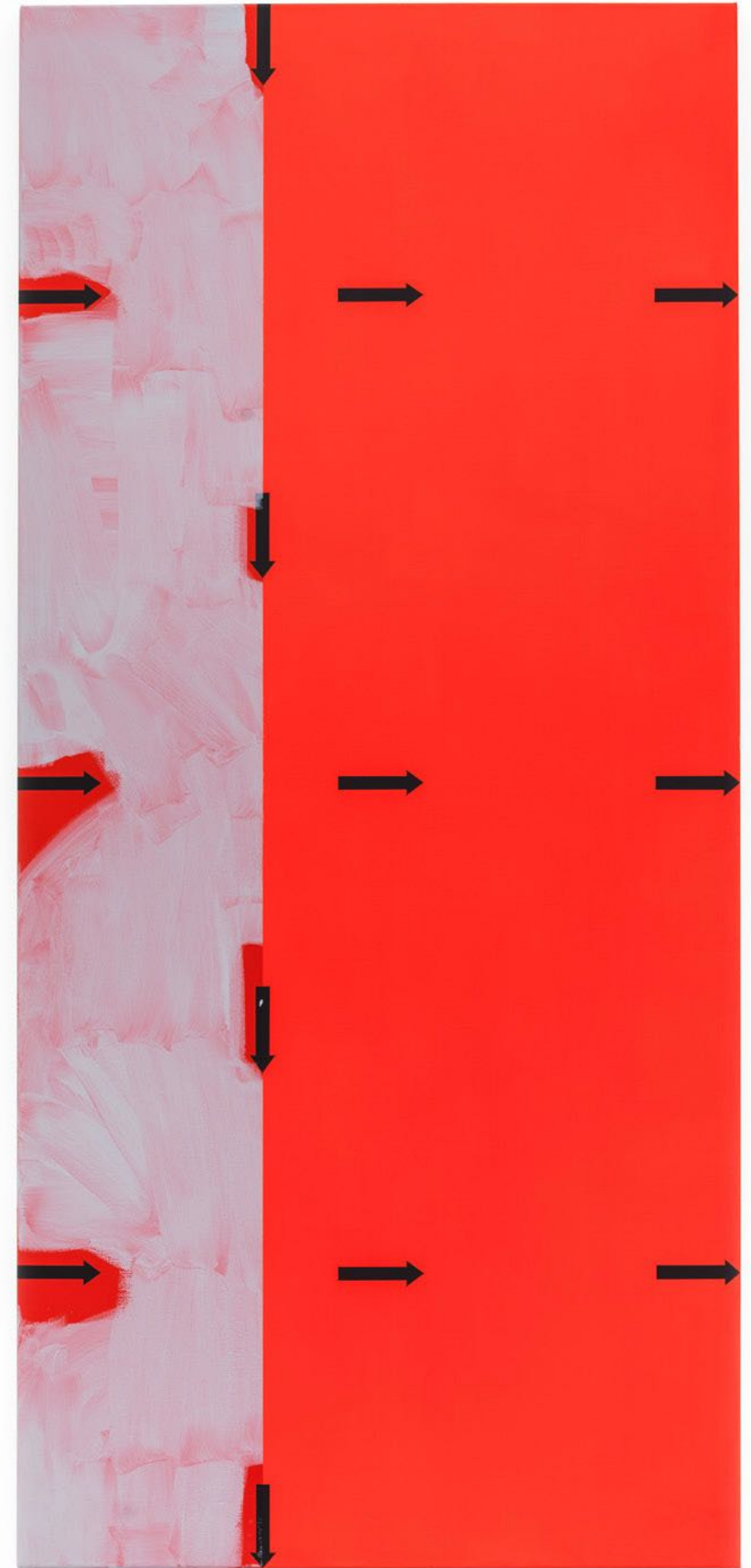
Martin van Zomeren, Amsterdam

2017



Untitled (AM#4), 2017
UV-print on canvas/linen
185 x 85 cm

Untitled (Witness the change #1), 2017
Primer, gesso and acrylics on canvas/linen
185 x 85 cm



Art Club #12/Folies d'hiver
curated by Pier Paolo Pancotto

Marieta Chirulescu, Nick Devereux, Masbedo, Nick Oberthaler, Achraf Touloub

Villa Medici, Académie de France à Rome
22 December 2016

Untitled (EXits, EXceptions, EXpressions and EXcuses), 2016
Gesso and acrylics on linen on stretchers
245 x 100 cm





Installation view

Art Club #12/Folies d'hiver

Villa Medici, Académie de France à Rome

2016

Nick Oberthaler

Eventuality

Traklhaus, Salzburg

29 July 2016 - 24 September 2016

He is interested in the necessities of painting. – Carl Andre on Frank Stella

Necessity and Eventuality – not his slogan or his artistic motto, but certainly of similar significance for Nick Oberthaler. Someone like him, working today in the field of abstract painting, is constantly confronted in the background with an old and powerful system of necessities and conventions surrounding the painted picture. This keeps open the question of what is necessary if one is to carry on realising possibilities for relevance. For many, this question would itself be irrelevant, as a relict of avant-garde thinking, but for Oberthaler, who has made a close study of the development of painting in recent decades and beyond, the historical dimension plays a definite role, since it is a matter of undamental aspects of painting: the artist's own application of one colour beside a different colour on a material in a restricted form on a wall in a room before a viewer, and subsequently of what happens or what is signified when individual or all sizes are varied or deactivated. Then he slips into the narrow straits of art-historical referentiality. Or is this a deliberate step into confrontation? Actually, the entire programme comes to mind: the modernist reflection on (image-)seeing, the ironic refraction of this self-exaggerating reflection through postmodernism and postminimalism, the picture's opening up to its spatial context, painting as object and display, Olivier Mosset, Tom Burr, Heimo Zobernig, Marthe Wéry, and so on. Such a wealth of influences increases the risk of comparison, and failure becomes a real and distinct possibility which must be taken into account. The self-doubt of an abstract painter at the beginning of the 21st century, whose earlier works, relating mainly to sub-cultures, are often surrounded by a strangely romantic melancholy, are then only consistent, though they by no means constitute an entire programme. Nevertheless, their presence or their (marginal) thematisation gives Oberthaler's minimalism a decisive psychological turn, which in places seems to lighten once more into self-irony. Take for instance the four oblique parallel lines lying within an invisibly drawn grid and let loose upon four lines going in the opposite direction; but because of their staggered position and divergent colours they absolutely refuse to overlay these, instead, as a significant "X" at their point of intersection, forming a rectangular composition, as though there were no escape from the grid. This is slapstick and despair, lightness and aporia. Even the mirrors frequently used as picture equivalents or supports, with the aim of spatial expansion, attacking the dogma of the two-dimensional picture, then become simple objects that merely return a dull reflection to the view. Similarly the deconstruction of a mirror-screen, originally planned in three parts, which in an earlier exhibitioni divided the room with impressive elegance, and now in its separate parts has lost something of its dignity, but seems more flexible, unpredictable and "mercurial". There is a strong signal here – showing, as in the new works consisting of waste material, the quintessence of the exhibition: more is possible; abstraction is not yet finished. Possibly...

(Text: Maximilian Geymüller, Vienna 2016)



Installation view

Eventuality
Traklhaus, Salzburg
2016



Installation view

Eventuality
Traklhaus, Salzburg
2016

What kind of bird is this?
Laetitia Badaut Haussmann, Nick Oberthaler, Hugo Scibetta

Levy Delval, Brussels
4 June 2016 - 9 July 2016

How to stay aware of our direct surroundings when this ability is taken care of by the constant interconnectivity, the free online dictionaries and the cloud backups? These media tend to be more trusted than the sheer observation of the milieu.

« What Kind Of Bird Is This? » Elementary, my dear Watson... Beyond the detective's cult phrase -so British, Watson is also a computer system able to answer to a multitude of questions, if they're asked in plain language. [1] This IBM-developed A.I. was programmed to answer to the Jeopardy TV game - game that the computer beat three times. So, if Watson is asked « What Kind Of Bird Is this?, do you think it will actually be able to answer?

« I can See The Whole Room And There's Nobody In It » [2] This the message on Roy Lichtenstein's painting that Nick Oberthaler is appropriating; a character can be seen looking through a peephole and telling that the whole room can be seen, but, not without humour, that there's no one to be seen! So where are we? While repeating this inquisitive gaze to the point it becomes a reoccurring question and while the information is constantly broken down to pieces, the Austria-born painter questions our mere viewer position and the very place of the exhibition. The round shaped window recalls the eye as well as the camera. What if the emptiness that Lichtenstein puts forth, is nothing more than a focal length issue? One eye has to be closed, it's a way to constraint the gaze to the space - and the opposite as well.

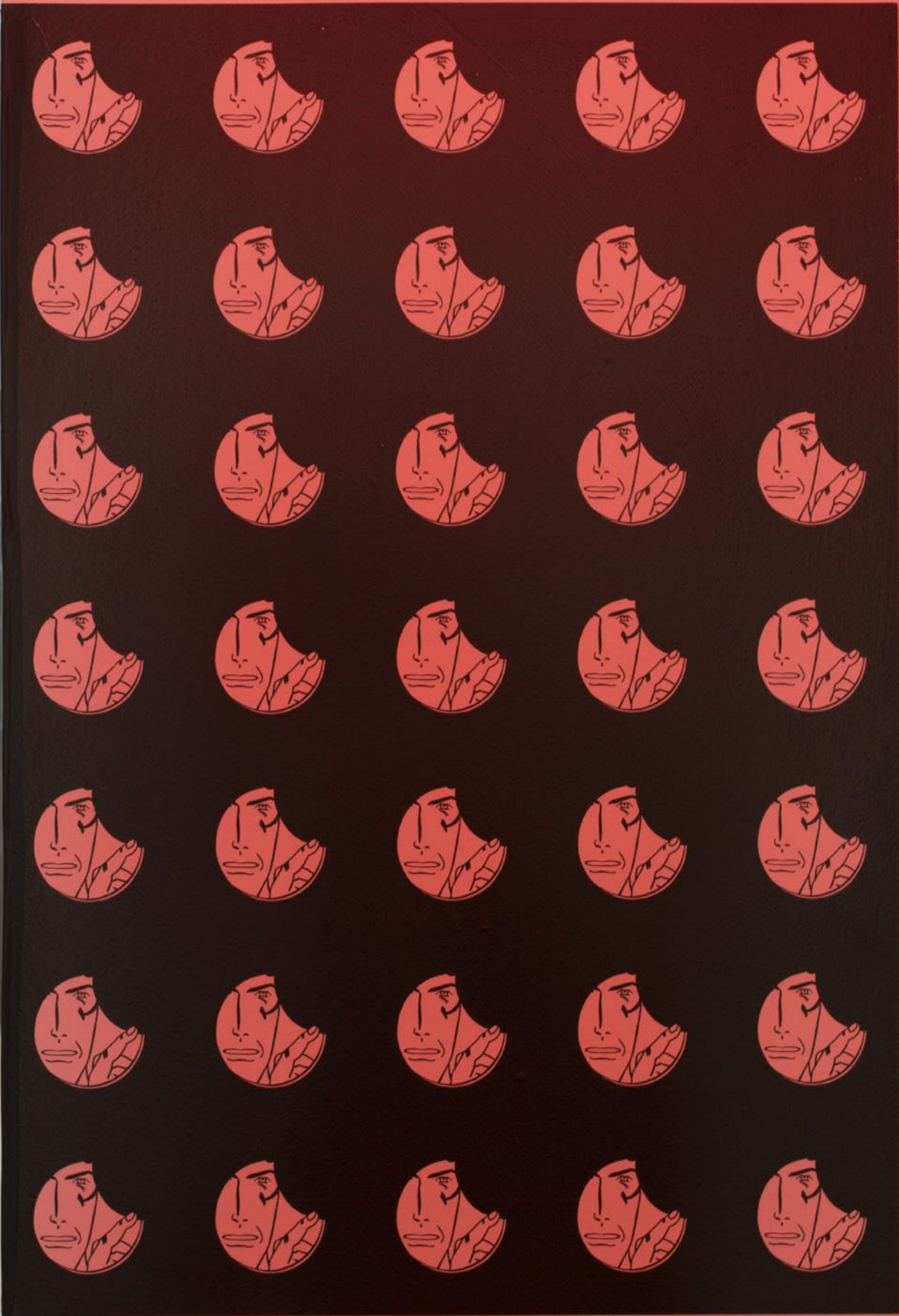
The same kind of gap operates in Hugo Scibetta's monochromes series. He's set a process where each time he has to use his cell phone, he has to take a picture. Then, the black mirroring screen of the phone becomes the front of the painting, while the picture of the environment becomes the edges, and thus the depth. It's not our point of view that is depicted - or imposed, but the one of a communication device. The result is a monochrome (made with a thick glazing) that creates an alter-space: the reflection of a landscape, both past and present. Moreover, Hugo found the title of the show while strolling on the Internet. These modern hikes and solitary daydreams are filling up our phones, computers and our beloved cloud with datas and meta-datas. That's how he realized the standardization of exhibitions photographs, as seen on Contemporary Art Daily for instance. These photographic reports generate an ubiquity, that is as enjoyable as it is deceptive. The marks of the typical exhibition photographs canons are erased by Hugo Scibetta until the depicted object is not recognizable anymore. This intervention is brilliant because the blurring process prevents any further reproduction. The new composition is so vibrant that a camera cannot properly focus. Thus, Hugo Scibetta stops the images and colors thieves.

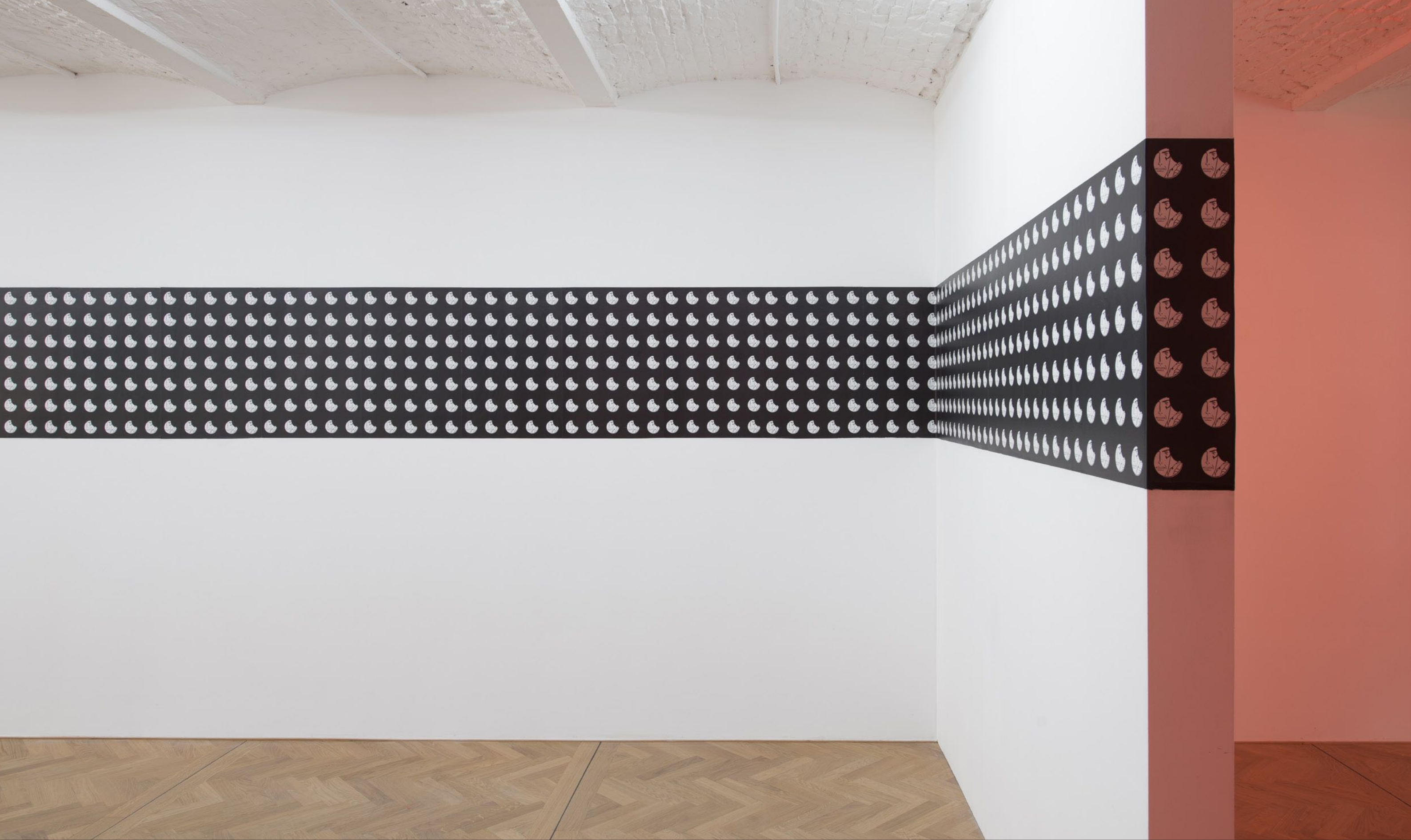
Hugo's chromatic compositions are resonating with Nick Oberthaler's colored neon lights that are creating pictorial ambiance. Made with the complicity of the two other artists, this intervention on the lights is as heady as an easy listening tune. The famous daylight neon - the white cube's partner in crime - when it's tinted, is now dividing and altering the space. Laëtitia Badaut Haussmann's intervention is in the same vein. As efficient as it is simple, she asked the gallerists to let the windows wide open during the opening hours. This spontaneous gesture allows the green leaves of the palm tree to be an inherent part of the show, while the outside hum becomes its constantly changing soundtrack. As far as the eyes can see, they are seduced by the interaction between the whiteness of the walls, the tinted industrial neon lights and the blue sky/green vegetation, that was hidden. In a gallery space freed of its usual compartments, sculptures get loose and soft while showing their ambivalence. Indeed, Laëtitia Badaut Haussmann designed the posters of the show and printed them on floating silk scarves; the communication supports become actual artworks that can be worn during Summertime. This play between the categories is also at stakes in the sentimental sculpture L'amour est plus fort que la mort: the bronze and sunset colors of the textile sculpture are blurring the frontiers between artificial and natural lights. The sleeping twinkling volume is a made to measure installation is hanging from the ceiling to stress upon its actual materiality. The most present piece in the gallery space, the twisted piece of fabric is embodying the knot that mixed and contradictory emotions can sometimes produce. It derives from the remote memory of reading Genet's Querelle de Brest.

Now, a bit further footprints left by Hugo Scibetta mark the end point of the visit. Casted in shape memory foam, they are combined with an augmented reality device that reveals a whole character with the help of a smartphone camera. An actual ghost. Or maybe a breath passing through a space now open to the outside. The word « ghosting » may evoke at first a mere disappearance but it takes a more precise meaning here. It is a brand new social trend that implies to literally vanish from social networks and to become invisible on the Internet; it's also used when a broadcasted image is replicated and superimposed. It's a « bug » that can be the visual equivalent of the « déjà-vu »; a disturbed image associated with a kind of intuition or elusive presentiment.

(Text: Arlène Berceliot Courtin, 2016)

1 Also called « natural », that is the human language
2 Roy Lichtenstein, I Can See the Whole Room...and There's Nobody in It!, 1961, oil and graphite on canvas, 121 x 121 cm.
3 A pastiche of US noir movies, Love Is Colder Than Death (1969) depicts a tricky love triangle relationship. It's R.W. Fassbinder's first feature film.





Installation view

What kind of bird is this?
Levy Delval, Brussels
2016

Untitled (...and there is nobody in it! / RL#2), 2016
Offset-print on blueback paper (Edition of 100)
59,4 x 42 cm

Nick Oberthaler

I can see the whole room! ...And there's nobody in it!

Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zurich

15 April 2016 - 28 May 2016

"I can see the whole room! ...And there is nobody in it!" announces the title of Austrian artist Nick Oberthaler's first solo show in Switzerland. Oberthaler (*1981 in Bad Ischl, lives in Vienna) references a speech bubble in a painting by pop artist Roy Liechtenstein, setting the quote on a black background with the image removed on his invitation card.

The title and quoted speech bubble reveal exemplary strategies underlying Oberthaler's conceptual painting practice.

Referring to an artist who oscillates between sophisticated kitsch and refined ambiguity, Oberthaler sets up an art-historical frame that deals with the equivocal nature of painting, revealing both its irony and the possibility of its own failure.

Oberthaler's painting seeks to fail productively under the conditions of art history, like that romantic irony that Friedrich Schlegel defined as the *"constant cycle of self-creation and self-destruction"*. But the title also brings the room as a condition of painting into the foreground: one could read it as a smug description of the pseudo-sacred almost-emptiness of art spaces, the effect of which we've all already questioned, but at the same time we can't really get over their allure. Oberthaler's paintings serve as three-dimensional settings in the rooms as well as thematizing themselves as objects within them. They are not illusionistic windows into imagined realities or gesturally expressed internalizations, but attempts, and masterful failures right from the outset, at combining self-restriction and eruption in a pseudo-modernist endgame. The installation draws this framework further into the room, energizes it and lends it a presence which can be seen as a precondition of painting.

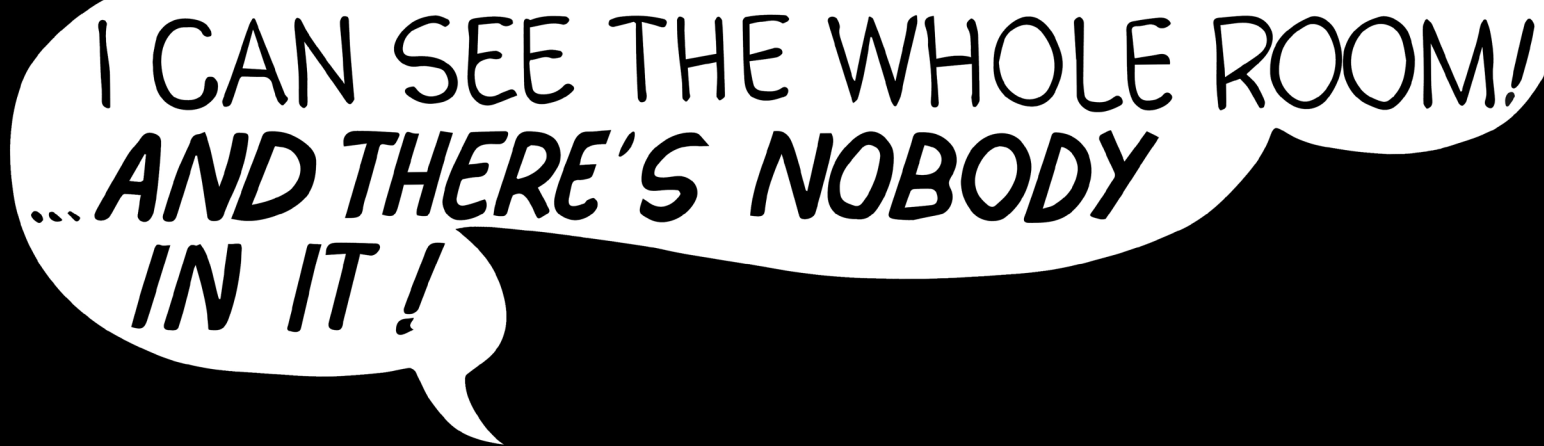
Time and again, mirrors are presented alongside Oberthaler's paintings like annotations. Like mirrors, paintings converge the narcissistic energies of the maker, as well as the collector, they transport apparent self-reflection that is always physical and spatial too. The observer's own body reflected back at them in the mirrors, next to the human-scale dimensions of the paintings (180 x 60 cm) forces the viewer to experience their physicality in relation to the painting, to locate themselves concretely in the room, and makes them an actor within the installation. The reflective foil Oberthaler has applied to the gallery windows extends this play into the urban environment: tempting the passersby by denying them a view of the interior. Only by pressing one's nose right against the glass can one vaguely make out the uninhabited space that the title refers to. In a familiar artistic gesture, the mirror foil functions simultaneously as invitation and exclusion.

(Text: Martin Jaeggi, Zurich 2016)

Untitled (I can see the whole room... / RL#1), 2016

Offset-print on blueback paper (Edition of 100)

59,4 x 42 cm





Installation view

I can see the whole room! ...And there's nobody in it!

Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zurich

2016



Installation view

I can see the whole room! ...And there's nobody in it!

Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zurich

2016

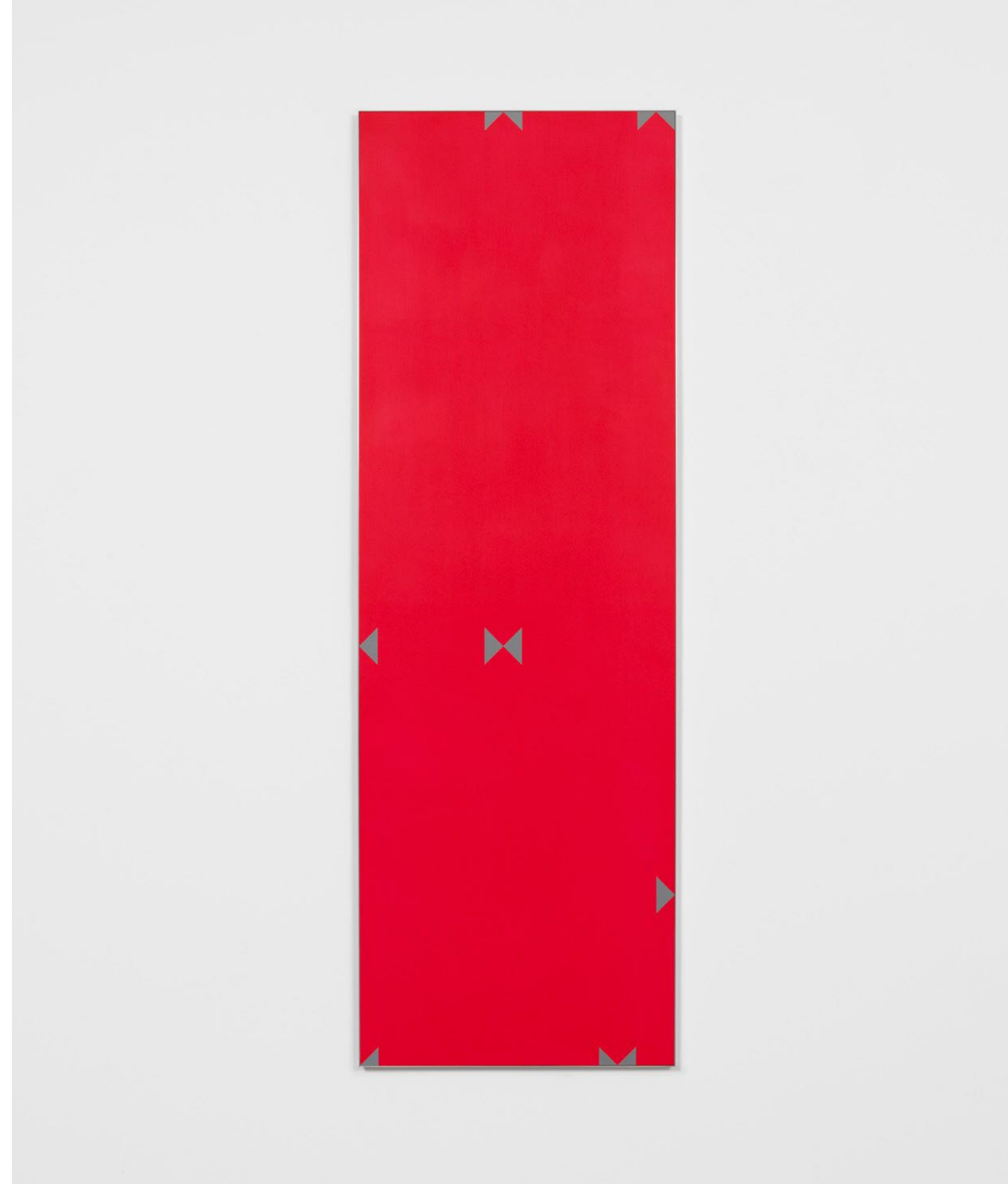


Installation view

I can see the whole room! ...And there's nobody in it!

Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zurich

2016



Untitled (Eventuality I), 2016
Primer, gesso and acrylics on HDF panel/wooden frame
180 x 60 cm

Nick Oberthaler
Distinct Features of Fast Oscillations in Phasic and Tonic Rapid Eye Movement

Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna
13 November 2015 - 9 January 2016

'Descartes taught the mathematicians of the classical age how to divide the euclidean plane into squares with two coordinates that intersect at a designated point of origin. Straight lines and a reference point. A foundation that makes it possible to talk about two dimensional events in a clear, concise and level way. Geometry enables seeing, it is the domain of viewing; algebra enables speech and writing, it is the domain of discourse; they are neighbours located at an interchange through which they flow into one another: a datum point, a site-less site and simultaneously the site of all sites, zero of all measurements and logos – but origin and enabler of speech and writing about the phenomenon of site. A pinpoint hole through which the words in the room diffuse, by which the things in the room can be ceaselessly spoken and written about. Through a fixed point presentation becomes discursive and discourse presentable.'
(Michel Serres, in: 'Über Malerei: Vermeer-La Tour-Turner', Philo Fine Arts, 2010)

The seven works on show - all in identical 180 x 100 cm format - are separated by the architecture of the gallery. Their appearance and our perception of them have been altered, along with the rooms themselves, by a spatial intervention. The artist has replaced half of the white neons lighting the space with red ones, causing reflections of red tubes in a mirror-polished stainless steel panel, visually shifting elements of the exhibition or fading them out of view. The exhibition title refers to this intervention in the space. Taken from neurology it describes the changes in visual perception in different sensory states.

Installation view

Distinct Features of Fast Oscillations in Phasic and Tonic Rapid Eye Movement
Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna
2015





Installation view

Distinct Features of Fast Oscillations in Phasic and Tonic Rapid Eye Movement

Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna

2015



Installation view

Distinct Features of Fast Oscillations in Phasic and Tonic Rapid Eye Movement

Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna

2015



Untitled (Distinct Oscillations/Butterflies), 2015
Primer, gesso and acrylics on aluminium
180 x 100 cm

Nick Oberthaler
No Subject No Image No Taste No Matter No Grace No Style

Bianca D’Alessandro, Copenhagen
7 August 2015 - 19 September 2015

The fact that Oberthaler’s geometric abstraction functions as “contemporary” art is due to a number of strategies the artist employs in the realization of his work that keeps it from merely perpetuating a historically established style. One of these strategies involves designing tables, paravents, curtains, partitions and vitrines in an approach adopted from the critical context-art of the 90s. His wall painting at Bianca D’Alessandro in Copenhagen, which takes its colour from the facade of the building housing the gallery, is perhaps the most overt coupling of painting and context-art in Oberthaler’s work.

Mirrors resurface time and again among the materials, stemming from an interest in contextual concerns – mirrors not only reflect but also, in certain cases, distort. A further strategy for contextualising abstraction is the artist’s use of representational images. Oberthaler uses borrowed images primarily from magazines and/or online sources, and prints them in grid format on aluminium panels. The arrangements are reminiscent of the work of Andy Warhol and Peter Roehr. Roehr, who died in 1968 aged only 23, assembled collages of advertising material in grid format, sizing the selections so that the images remained intact, and did not assume an abstracted pattern. Oberthaler’s figurative elements are selected not only by proportion, but also for their high light/shade contrast, rendering them capable of achieving a much more abstract quality.

In terms of surface, Oberthaler’s painted and printed works are almost indistinguishable. The aluminium is painted with a very smooth, polished primer, with inevitable traces from processes such as masking resulting in sharply delineated shapes. Oberthaler not only references representational images as the dominant visual form of today (and using a concreteness very specific to the time of his artistic beginnings), even his paintings, which often look printed, always stay at least in clear sight/reach of contemporary printing techniques. Thus some works call to mind pixelated computer graphics or the raster lines of vacuum tube monitors, which are now relegated to the technological past.

For his exhibition at Bianca D’Alessandro he borrows John Cage’s declaration of independence at the occasion of a Robert Rauschenberg exhibition in 1953, “No Subject, No Image, No Taste...” referring to all transcendentalism, and much more than just an exhibition title. The assertion of a reality external to the image, Oberthaler seems to be saying, can no longer be a discursive category in post-modernism.

(Text: Christoph Bruckner, Vienna 2015)



Untitled (NoNoNoNoNoNo), 2015
Primer, gesso, acrylics and offset-print on aluminium
180 x 100 cm



Installation view

No Subject No Image No Taste No Matter No Grace No Style
Bianca D'Alessandro, Copenhagen
2015



Installation view

No Subject No Image No Taste No Matter No Grace No Style

Bianca D'Alessandro, Copenhagen

2015



Installation view

No Subject No Image No Taste No Matter No Grace No Style

Bianca D'Alessandro, Copenhagen

2015

Nick Oberthaler
Pièce dérivée

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris
18 March 2015 - 18 April 2015

For his second solo exhibition at Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Nick Oberthaler has chosen to explore the very gesture of exhibiting within art. The title *Pièce dérivée*, intentionally selected in French by the artist in order to play on the words' various meanings, is a *portmanteau*. Deployed in the white cube of the gallery, the concept invests the space as much as the physical pieces displayed on walls and in vitrines—while still showing reverence for their forms as objects. “Pièce” may refer as much to the piece of music that exists on the partition as to the music the moment it’s played, abstract and ephemeral once it comes to life through sound. “Dérivé” completes the vision that the artist focuses on, regarding the question of the work of art itself. Arranging salvaged fragments and elements, Oberthaler toys with the very notion of derivation, in the sense of manipulation, but also of la dérive as a shift without purpose, without reason. The way Nick Oberthaler carves out elements and forms is an invitation to decode and to recognize past artistic achievements, whose vestiges we reinterpret ceaselessly in the present day.

Nick Oberthaler, known for his drawings composed of subtle superpositions of photocopies, colored surfaces, and geometric forms, has recently radicalized and amplified his œuvre by painting on mirrored surfaces and by sometimes resorting to extremely basic materials, stripped of any commercial value, in order to question the very act of exhibiting, of creation, of art’s added value. From the microscopic scale of the colored paper fragment to the macroscopic scale of a detached wall, each element has the same representational value of the world. Nick Oberthaler’s work is one of detachment, a question of scale, a way of conceiving the universe through the orchestration of fragments and the sensitive gaze.

In this exhibition, Oberthaler particularly treats the different modes of representation in painting while interrogating the conditions of the image. The rapport between the subject, the reference, and the abstract characters - as well as the function and appearance of frameworks for imagery in the space - is reflected by repetitive arrangements and through collage. The boundaries between presentation and representation are confounded: the phenomenal experience of painting meets materiality, which at once makes possible and resists (or eludes) on both fronts, in so far as the painting itself is at once meaningful material and practical material.

Installation view

Pièce dérivée
Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris
2015

Untitled (Pièce dérivée), 2015
Offset-prints on plasterwall-element
approx. 450 x 350 cm





Installation view

Pièce dérivée

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris

2015



Installation view

Pièce dérivée

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris

2015

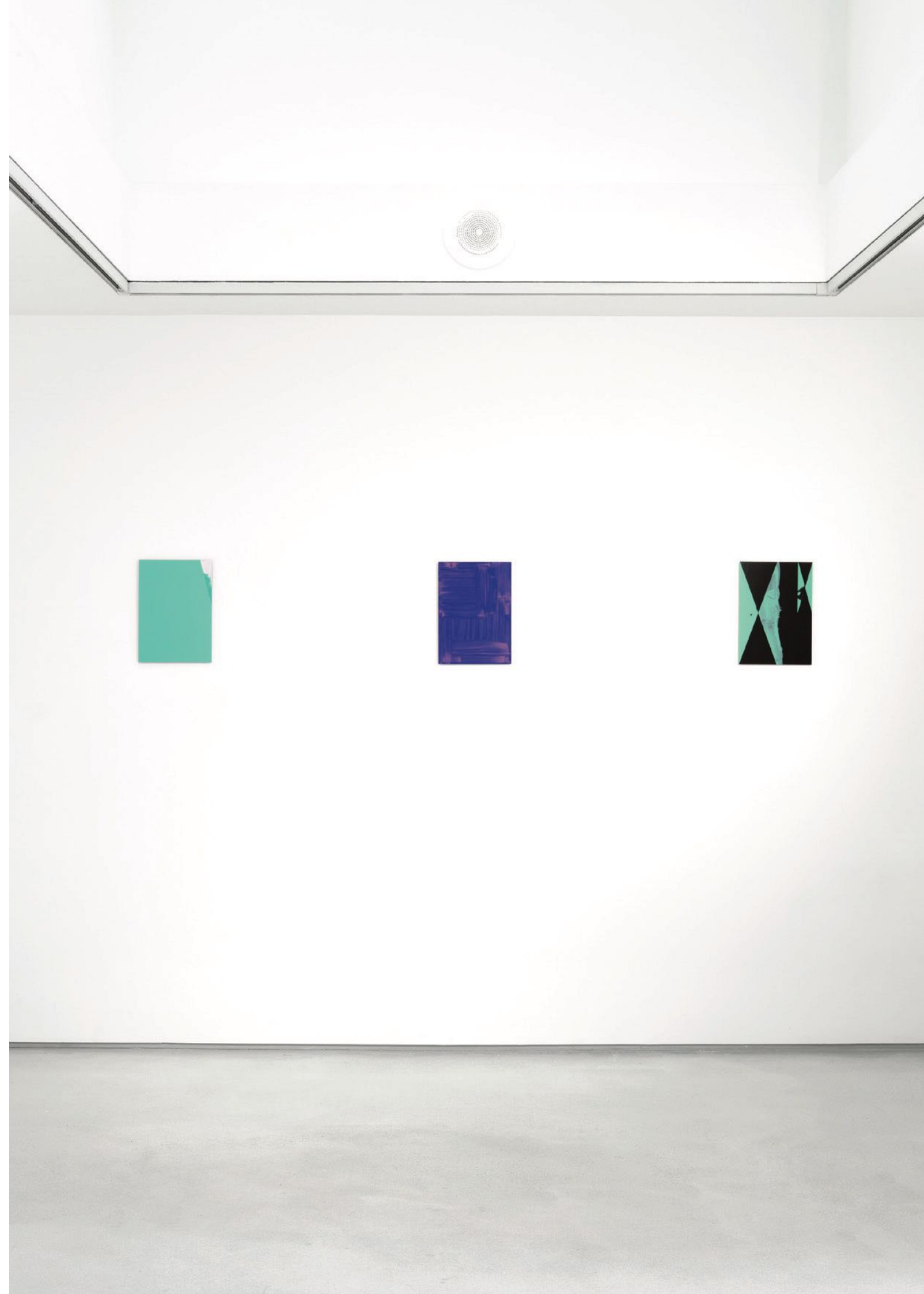
Installation view

Pièce dérivée
Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris
2015



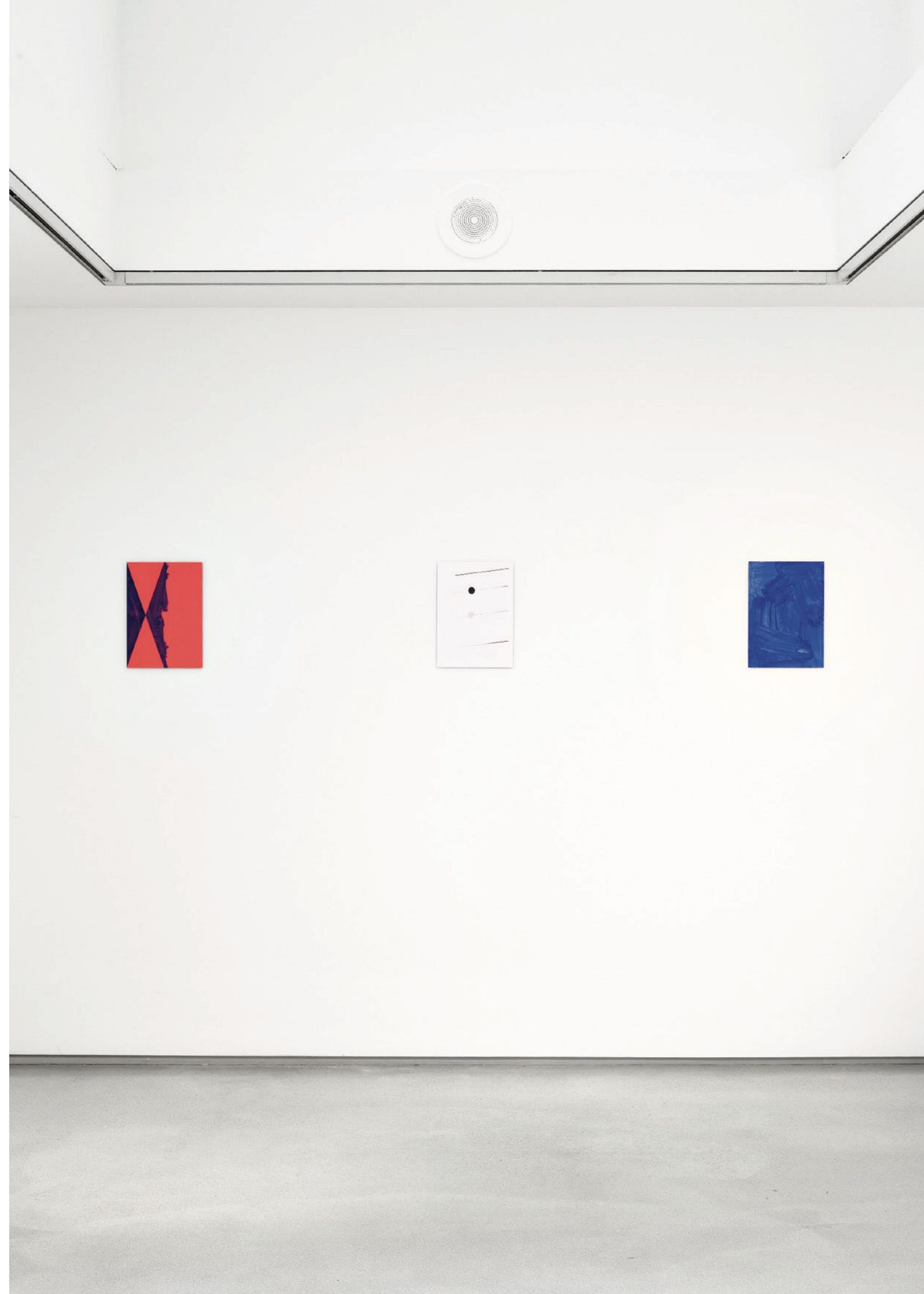
Installation view

Pièce dérivée
Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris
2015



Installation view

Pièce dérivée
Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris
2015



Black Pages

01-100

FJK3, Raum für zeitgenössische Kunst Wien

23 March 2022 - 17 July 2022

BLACK PAGES is an artist fanzine that came to a conclusion after producing one hundred issues over a period of thirteen years. The BLACK PAGES 01–100 exhibition at FJK3, Raum für zeitgenössische Kunst takes the form of an extensive installation and pays tribute to this remarkable publishing venture, which was launched in 2009 by Christoph Meier (born in 1980), Ute Müller (born in 1978), and Nick Oberthaler (born in 1981) in Vienna. Over the duration of the exhibition, a series of live talks, improvised concerts, and performances will bring to life the social and discursive dynamics that have been vital to the project from its inception.

BLACK PAGES was conceived as an art exhibition space in print form. This central idea has now been translated into a three-dimensional space. BLACK PAGES 01–100 is devised as a tour across the aesthetic parameters of the artzine and provides insight into the different artistic practices as they relate to exhibiting in the publication format. The individual issues, whose designs reflect artistic positions, appeared in limited editions of 300 copies, came in DIN A5 format, contained a 16-page black and white core, and, as a democratic principle, featured only the artist's first name as the title.

BLACK PAGES 01–100 highlights the scope of experimentation the artzine spawned as a medium of presentation, representation, and documentation. A number of artists saw BLACK PAGES as an opportunity to explore forms of visual storytelling, as a medium where photography, film, performance, comics, drawings, object art, and painting could take shape along with language-based art, theoretical reflections, and poetry. The individual issues of BLACK PAGES on display in this show are not only objects inviting to engage with their content, but double as elements of its spatial design. Their arrangement around the room evokes a rhythmic structure reminiscent of musical notations.

The design principles guiding BLACK PAGES are reflected on multiple levels throughout the show. Franz and Josef, the names seen on the front and back glass facades of the Franz Josefs Kai 3 exhibition space, appear to echo the first names on the magazine covers. Entering the first exhibition room feels like stepping into the core pages of the black-and-white magazine as it appears to be drained of all color by yellow mono-frequency lighting.

Under the glass roof of the central area of Franz Josefs Kai 3, leather fauteuils designed by Josef Hoffmann in 1910 create a casual club atmosphere. Under the title BACK STAGE, this part of the exhibition provides a stage for a highly focused series of accompanying events.

Installation view

Black Pages 01-100

FJK3 Raum für zeitgenössische Kunst, Wien

2022





Installation view

Black Pages 01-100

FJK3 Raum für zeitgenössische Kunst, Wien

2022



Installation view

Black Pages 01-100

FJK3 Raum für zeitgenössische Kunst, Wien

2022

Black Pages

#1-#95

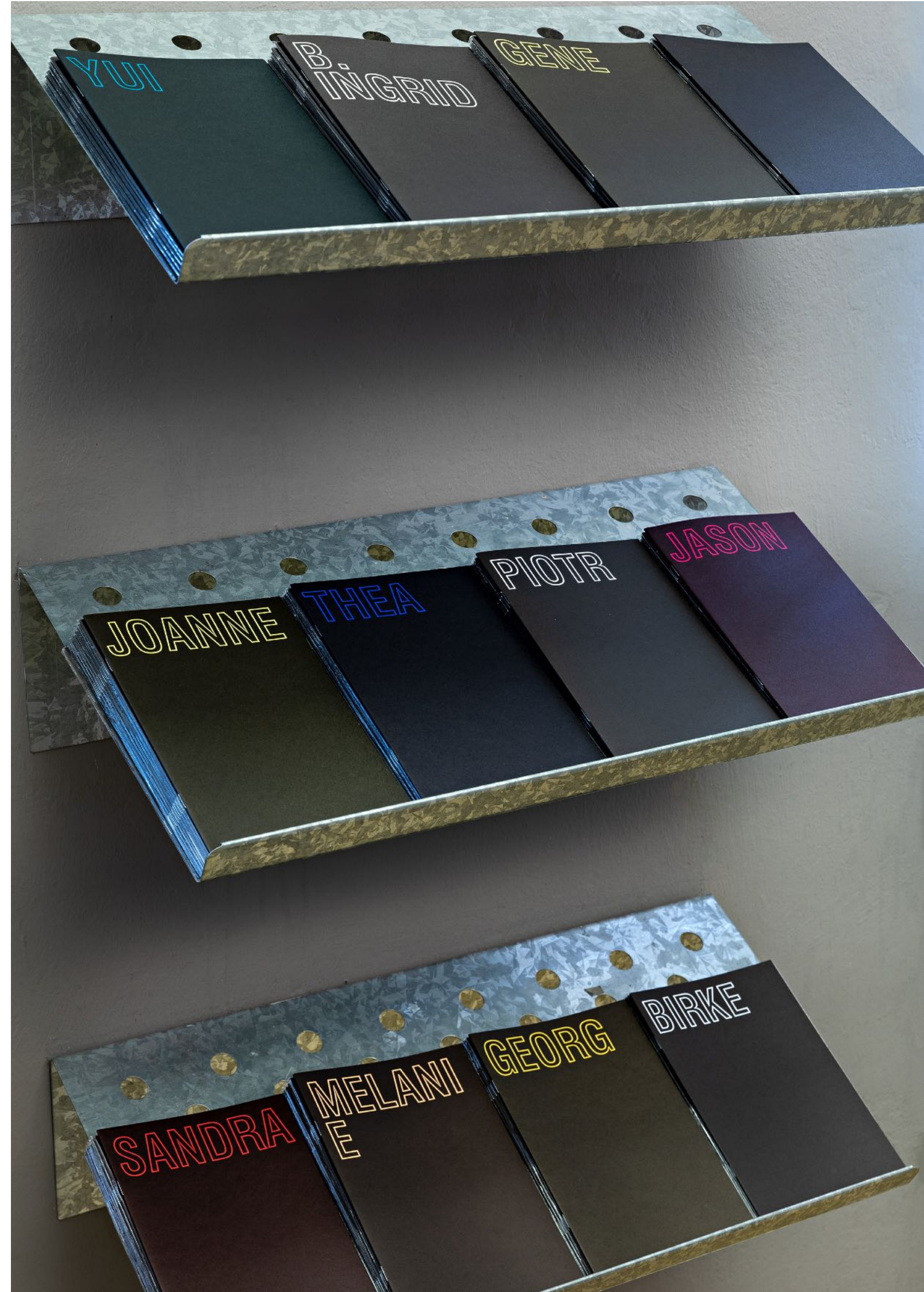
Kunstverein Bielefeld

14 November 2020 - 1 August 2021

The Kunstverein Bielefeld is delighted to present Black Pages, introducing a format conceived as an exhibition space in printed form. Every issue is based on a pre-determined structure; the journal is always published in an edition of three hundred, printed in black and white in A5 format. In each issue, international artists are invited to create work filling twenty pages, with a cover featuring only each artist's first name. These principles connect Black Pages to the idea of the fanzine, an alternative communications medium which has flourished since the beginning of the twentieth century. In a variety of subcultures, fanzines were recognized as a cheap way of directly propagating ideas, outside established institutional structures and hegemonic structures. For artists, they offered new platforms of presentation, representation and distribution.

Black Pages has designed an exhibition for the Kunstverein Bielefeld which, for the first time, gives an overview of the ninety-five issues already published, while offering a contemporary perspective on publishing as an artistic practice. Another project, available on the Kunstverein Bielefeld online platform, transposes Black Pages into online space, making the fanzine digitally available for the first time.

Black Pages was founded in Vienna in 2009 by Christoph Meier, Ute Müller and Nick Oberthaler. The series is held by institutional collections including MACBA Barcelona, the libraries of Columbus College of Art & Design in Ohio, MUMOK Wien, the University of Applied Arts Vienna, the Center for Artist's Publications at the Museum für moderne Kunst Weserburg at Bremen, and the Artist's Books Collection at Rennes University.





Installation view

Black Pages #1-#95
Kunstverein Bielefeld
2021



Installation view

Black Pages #1-#95
Kunstverein Bielefeld
2021



Installation view

Black Pages #1-#95
Kunstverein Bielefeld
2021