

KATZ CONTEMPORARY

FLORIAN BÜHLER

KATZ CONTEMPORARY is pleased to present its first exhibition with young artist Florian Bühler.

Florian Bühler's work (*1983 in Lugano, CH) focuses on painting and its strength, creating a wayward and sometimes almost malicious reality. Bühler's obstinate style is characterised by realistic paintings, which the physical objects are transferred onto the canvas with a meticulous technique of the young artist. The viewer may feel the exact motives of the surface with the fingertips, that's been rendered so precisely and palpably. At a closer look the viewer discovers a nearly invisible fine film, which covers the different materials on the canvas. This way, the facsimiles are standardized, bringing the objects back to their reality at an intangible distance. The pictures become hyper realistic evidences of that reality.

Florian Bühler bases himself in the field of the naïve painting with a reflection of the Dutch painters of the 17th Century. This root enables him to execute the techniques with intense examination of his objects. The artist goes through several stages of applications of glaze until the pigment layers become a finished surface. This elaborate technique is a rarity in today's art production. Florian Bühler's work shows a direct connection to the old masters in the choice of its subjects—he exhibits the tendency to express himself mostly through (self-) portraits, still life or genre painting. However the different genres always overlap with another ("Self-Portrait and Fruit Still-Life All in One").

The exploration of his own face and body is neither to be understood as an introspective search of the self nor as a narcissistic act. Rather, the artist sees the self-portrait as his own dummy—his personal object. One's own body offers itself as an ideal material for experiments, while it resists the aesthetic attacks on the painter. Florian Bühler's portraits often suggest emotions that range from threat or anxiousness to grimace outbursts. Clearly defined with precise brush touches, the facial features are hardly able to hold the personal expression under control. On the contrary, the monstrous side seems to be tamed with more trouble. The artist doesn't merely catch the models; he lets them develop or refute into a partial dissolution. This kind of distortions, which are recurrent in Bühler's (self-) portraits or in the fantastic phenomenon appearing in his "outdoor" paintings ("Outdoor Piece I & II") are a conscious decision of the artist, who is apt to lose control over the outside form.

The transformation of the object into the painting goes along with the disappearance of its tangibility. The insurmountable tension, which could be detected with a single glance at Florian Bühler's work, doesn't rise from the imitation of a specific texture, but rather from the illusion of the same.

Florian Bühler graduated from the Academy of Art in Zurich in 2007. He lives and works in Zurich.

Opening 31. March 2009, 7 pm – 9 pm

Exhibition "Florian Bühler / Jörg Immendorff", 1. April – 16. May 2009

Opening hours: Tuesday – Friday 11am – 18 pm, Saturday 12 am – 16 pm or by appointment

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JÖRG IMMENDORFF

KATZ CONTEMPORARY is pleased to present a selection of Jörg Immendorff's works in a variety of different media for its upcoming exhibition.

Since the early 1980's, Jörg Immendorff (*1945 in Bleckede, Germany; † 2007 in Düsseldorf) is known as one of the most important artists in Germany. After studying stage set design at the Düsseldorf Art Academy, he became one of the closest students of Joseph Beuys. Evolving in a context that is strongly influenced by the post-war period, the partition of Germany and the 1968's protest movement, Jörg Immendorff's work largely deals with politics, sociology and history.

His paintings constitute a central part of his artistic production; his large-scale canvases are depicted in an expressive realistic style with vivid colours, exaggerating each element to its graphic extreme. Developing his own iconography, Immendorff fills his works with artists, intellectuals, politicians and numerous icons. The oil painting "Section de merde allemande" (sentimental)" (1990) presented for this show is very much the representative of Immendorff's style. The artist's mentor Joseph Beuys and the famed gallerist Michael Werner are shown together, seated in a dimly lit environment. The background that resembles a stage is a typical construction of Immendorff's work, which often consists of images within images. His stage set composition may allude to the illusionary aspects of art. In the 1990's the artist developed a great interest for the dramatic work "Peer Gynt" (play written in 1876 by Henrik Ibsen), which gave birth to the significant painting "Gyntiana" (1992). Later in 1996 a series of powerful gouaches expended on the theme of the imaginary land named "Gyntiana" or "Aualand" and the character of "Peer Gynt", whom Immendorff undoubtedly identifies himself with. Some of these works are presented here.

Besides painting, Immendorff dedicated himself to sculpture. He created an important series of ape bronze sculptures that became one of his landmarks. Immendorff displays the ape motif, in all sizes and poses, either in human-like activity or with similar attributes. His apes appear to be dignified and innocent, rather than beastly. Immendorff has frequently used the ape as a self-portrait and indicating it as his alter ego. One sculpture depicts the artist himself as an ape holding hand with Beuys, another playing with his young daughter Ida, or as a painter with the palette attribute. The ape is a central figure throughout Immendorff's work, representing the artist's self-mockery as well as his advisor.

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Film showing: "Ich.Immendorff"

7. & 28. April 2009, 7 pm

(Nicola Graef, 2007, 99 min.)