

IN MEDIAS RES / The middle of painting

Amina Giger, Valentin Hauri, Fabio Melone, Darko Milosevic, Nora Schiedt, Karin Schwarzbek Christian Vetter; curated by Christian Vetter

2.11. - 21.12.2019, Opening: 1.11.2019, 18h

In recent decades, painting has become radically individualised. The positions most in demand in the art business have been those that have established themselves on the peripheries of the medium, in the niches of individual distinctiveness. But painting has another use: painting that is aware of its inherent features and functions and makes direct use of them; painting that seeks not so much individual particularity as common interests; painting that questions the essence and significance of an analogue medium of expression in a mediatized world.

IN MEDIAS brings together seven painters from Zurich who devote themselves head-on and without prejudice to painting. What they all have in common is that they see painting primarily as praxis and less as production: the practices of experiencing the world and the body. The paintings do not degrade the finished work, yet insist of their provisional nature. One painting takes over from the other and continues what the previous one had begun. Painted pictures are like a membrane connecting humans with the world. As such, and less as art-discourse statements, they assume their importance as a means of personal affirmation and knowledge.

Some of the artists on show here are still largely unknown. Others are appearing in public for the first time in this exhibition. Amina Giger, Fabio Melone and Nora Schiedt are former students of art communication at the ZHdK, where Christian Vetter has been teaching for several years now. Amina Giger explores very fundamental ways in which painting functions: How can lines produce planes? How can differently coloured planes be linked with one another so as to produce forms and representations? How is a figure linked into the pictorial plane? Giger achieves an impressive presence in her paintings through her courage to be uncompromising. Fabio Melone explores the potential inherent in depicting obsessive corporeality. His way of doing this is to hover between drawing, collage and painting. In a constant flow, he mounts and dismantles both his own picture material and that of others, whereby the painted body increasingly becomes the body of painting. Nora Scheidt's pictorial invention is more ramified. Her works are transformations of her own perceptions of her immediate surroundings, which she first captures in photographs and then reanimates in drawings and paintings. She thus condenses what she has perceived into spatial compositions or differentiated colour tones in her paintings.

Darko Milosevic attends a social Day Structure service in Zurich for people with cognitive impairments. It is particularly pertinent for him that painting represents a life praxis. Darko's highly introverted and taciturn personality literally pierces the surface when he strings lines together in minimal drawings and paintings and defines the painting's plane by means of movement, time and paint material.

Christian Vetter has been exchanging ideas with Valentin Hauri and Karin Schwarzbek for years. Valentin Hauri's path is leading him to every more precise and radical pictorial inventions. With apparent lightness he relates painted planes to one another in such a way as to emphasize the edges and intermediary spaces and enable reduced and condensed pictorial narratives to unfold.

Karin Schwarzbek's painterly path is also characteristic by a search that takes her to an essential feature of painting: how the paint applied by the body (be the gesture as random as wiping your hand clean on your trousers) becomes the body of paint, more precisely, the skin-like surface of the corpus of a picture.

In recent years Christian Vetter has turned his attention fully to the painted image, finding his way back from a long phase of black-and-white painting to affirmative, gestural and colour- laden paintings. The ornamentation visible of late points to the symmetries inherent in living creatures and their echo in the widespread popular art forms.

Christian Vetter

Talk with the artists and the curator
Thursday, 5 December 2019, 6pm