

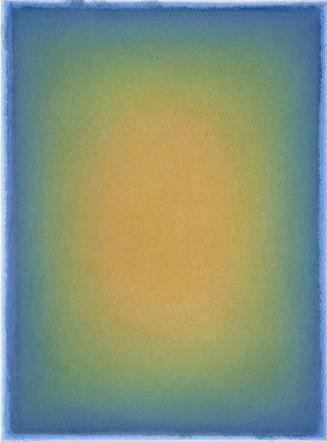
Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle

Slawomir Elsner

Self-Portrait as a Painter

Sep 02 – Oct 28, 2023

Opening: Friday, Sep 01, 2023, 6–9 pm



Slawomir Elsner, Just Watercolors (124), 2023, Watercolor on paper, 42,8 x 32,5 cm, Counterpart to: after Van Gogh, Self-Portrait with Straw Hat

Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle is pleased to present the Berlin-based artist Slawomir Elsner (*1976) in his fourth solo exhibition. In his series "Imaginäre Erinnerung (Imaginary Memory)", which so far comprises about 150 works and is still ongoing, the artist has been focusing since 2014 on canonical works of art history, the artist has been focusing since 2014 on canonical works of art history, which he poetically reflects in a unique technique of overlapping color line mesh as colored pencil drawings on paper.

Recently, the works of his renowned "Just Watercolors" series, realized on handmade paper, have also made reference to iconic paintings, thus transcending their inherent self-referentiality based on their potentiated degree of abstraction. The complex, delicate and meticulously executed works on paper blur the boundaries between drawing and painting, being both and at the same time something entirely third. They seem not only to finally dissolve the art-historically long-standing paragone between disegno and colore, but to make it entirely obsolete. Slawomir Elsner skillfully fuses painting and drawing; he is a line painter, oscillating between coincidence and constructedness, between blur and precision. Elsner's new exhibition is dedicated to a selection of self-portraits by the iconic Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh, created between 1885 and 1889.

The rhythmic structuredness and formally organized dynamics exhibited by Van Gogh's gestural color applications in the Post-Impressionist style likewise become observable in Elsner's color networks as short, straight lines of varying color laid next to and on top of each other. With a suitable reception distance, the pointillist strokes merge illusionistically into an overall impression. The resulting diffuse fields of form and color testify to skillful light direction and interrogate our collective pictorial memory. The watercolors of the series "Just Watercolors" are also characterized by luminous fields of form and color. Initially non-referential, anti-figurative and non-narrative, their tension unfolds in the visualization of their processual character, in their interplay of transparency and condensation, which incorporates their own carrier material pictorially into the compositions. The surface tension of the water as well as the varying degrees of the paper's saturation cause the pigments to collect and create meandering water edges that cannot be directly controlled, constituting a transition between surface and space. The diptychs created in the context of the exhibition take up the color and light areas of Van Gogh's self-portraits - that well-known pictorial genre whose individual reasons for creation can be traced back to pragmatism, self-documentation, self-staging, as well as the urge to experiment with painting techniques - and bring out their essence through a realization in both series in equal measure.

Slawomir Elsner's works are part of international collections, including the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Pinakothek der Moderne Munich; KiCo Stiftung at Lenbachhaus, Munich; Collection of the European Central Bank, Frankfurt/ Main; Collection LBBW, Stuttgart; Olbricht Collection, Berlin; Rubell Family Collection, Miami, USA; Bechtler Museum of Modern Art, Charlotte, North Carolina, USA. Recent significant solo exhibitions include Hessen Kassel Heritage, Schloss Wilhelmshöhe (2023); Museum Wiesbaden (2021); Lenbachhaus, Munich (2020).

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