

# Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle

**Helene Appel**  
**Sep 11 – Nov 21, 2020**  
**opening day**  
**Fri, Sep 11, 2020 / 3 – 9 pm**



Helene Appel, *Twig*, 2020, oil and watercolour on linen, 84,5 x 60 cm.

Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle is pleased to present the second solo exhibition of Helene Appel. In her new work groups, she continues to investigate the technical aspects and limits of painting. Her subjects are details from nature: Lifesize quasi-details of tree trunks are seen next to flamelike colors blazing across the canvas that disintegrate into abstraction through watermarks. Lumps of soil perforate or crumble on the canvas; branches or stones on sand captivate viewers with their three-dimensional, realistic appearance. The raw canvas and the true-to-scale representation remain the artist's main characteristics. With utmost precision, she approaches the materiality and delicateness of her models, which usually sit in front of her in a scale of 1:1 as she paints them.

Currently Helene Appel is working on painting crumbly soil whose ground partially disintegrates. A preliminary small-format study of this is featured in the exhibition. Thick lumps of soil, dry on the surface but still damp deep inside, seem to form the image's surface. In the style of Lucio Fontana, she slashes the canvas, at times all the way to the edge of the stretcher frame, which creates the impression that something mysterious hides underneath the ground's surface. On the one hand the pictorial space is expanded, on the other the shadow behind the holes matches the soil's color scheme so that one must look twice to see if the hole is actually in the canvas or in the soil in the picture.

Helene Appel expertly balances figurative and abstract painting. Not only that: she allows her models a spatial presence. This is also true for the tree trunk exhibited in the stairway. Here the object is almost completely separated from the canvas, as the trunk was cut out to its edge. Like a three-dimensional silhouette, it seems to levitate in the space and appears like a sculpture.

Very much in the vein of Lucio Fontana, Helene Appel finds it important for painting to constantly reinvent itself and find its place in the respective time. Especially in a time when we are increasingly navigating a virtual, digital world, we find ourselves longing for tangible and experienceable moments of reality. And Helene Appel's representations of objects from our natural, everyday surroundings help us attain that. The contemplative element and the presence brought about by the details introduce a calm into the roaring noise in our heads and our restless bodies.

Helene Appel (\*1976 in Karlsruhe) studied Painting at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste Hamburg and the Royal College of Art in London. She lives and works in Berlin. Most recently, her works were shown at the CCA Andratx in Mallorca, Spain, where she was an artist-in-residence in 2019. Her works are shown internationally and are represented in collections such as La Gaia Collection, Busca (Italy), Mönchehaus Museum Goslar, and the Olbricht Collection, Berlin. Currently she is teaching Painting at HBK Braunschweig.

(J. Singer)

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