

Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle

Jan Merta

My Fault?

Sept. 15–Nov. 24, 2018

Opening: Friday, Sept. 14, 2018, 6–9 pm

The artist is present.



Jan Merta, *Sestřička III / Nurse III*, 2018, oil on canvas, 260 x 230 cm.

On the occasion of the OPEN art 2018, Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle presents the work of renowned Czech painter Jan Merta. First attempts at describing the artist's paintings invariably fail when trying to make out the representational aspects in his complete reduction of forms. At first glance the eye is confronted with a minimalist representation of an object, which, upon a closer inspection, reveals itself to be more concrete and vivid.

Jan Merta, one of the great Czech painters, has been shaping a new concept of art. He deconstructs the depiction of reality in painting by abstracting everyday items to such an extent that the actual object loses itself in the reduced representation—yet the artist never crosses the line into abstraction. In terms of form and content, his works never leave the object.

Though Merta studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague during communist rule, he never wanted to follow the Social Realist style. The artist drew inspiration from the works of Andy Warhol, Barnett Newman, and Mark Rothko, whose freewheeling thoughts about art he discovered in the university library. Merta's motifs are culled from everyday life and subsequently abstracted to give them more complex meaning and depth. Reduced representations of the human body, portraits, architectural elements, or floating objects recur in Merta's works; they change and, depending on the perspective, seem familiar and intimate.

The show *My Fault?* at Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle comprises various genres in Merta's oeuvre. All works are philosophically connected; even the exhibition title encourages visitors to deal with fundamental questions of our existence. Works like *Nurse* or *Native American* explore historical events and toy with personal associations and questions of life and death. With the title, *My Fault?*, Merta calls on viewers to project their personal experience onto the works on display so as to bring home the consequences of their own existence on any given event, thus raising awareness of their own responsibilities. This way, the works change according to subjective perceptions, taking on a form of individual imagination.

Jan Merta (*1952 in Šumperk) studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague in the 1980s. He still lives and works there and in České Lhotice. In 2005 and 2009, he was nominated for *Person of the Year* for his artistic achievements. Later, he was appointed to the jury of the *Jindřich Chalupecký Award*, which each year is given to emerging artists under the age of thirty-five. Aside from exploring themes concerning the human being, Merta uses his art to deal with architecture and nature in an idiosyncratic and often ironic, critical way. (S. Sokolov)

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