

# Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle

## **Painting Show – Part Two**

**12. September 2015 – 07. November 2015**

**Eröffnung: Freitag, 11. September 2015, 18 – 21 Uhr**

In Part Two of the Painting Show, Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle presents works by Thomas Helbig (DE), Ma Ke (CN), Karin Kneffel (DE), Andrew Palmer (GB), Qiu Ruixiang (CN), and Thomas Zipp (DE). Part One featured works by Helene Appel (DE), Jānis Avotiņš (LT), Adrian Ghenie (RO), Toulou Hassani (IR), Kour Pour (GB), and Florian Süßmayr (DE).

In Thomas Helbig's most recent works, immaterial traces of jewelry, decorative chains, and cosmic motifs light up against the dark background of the medium, much like in photograms. Helbig uses colorful stage fabrics as carrier material. In contrast to a canvas, the surface swallows the light that hits it, or reflects it as a soft gleam. The visibility of the golden selvage reinforces the solemn appearance of the fabric and, at the same time, undermines its pathos in a subtle way. Its deceptive backlighting, in which the fragile negative forms take shape, are owed to the paint mist left by previous spraying activity. The thing in itself has disappeared; what viewers perceive is an afterglow. This reversal of painting acts as a form of trickery, and Helbig raises the medium's question of presentation and representation in a hybrid play of material and color application. Thomas Helbig studied at the Academy of Fine Arts Munich and at Goldsmiths, University of London. He lives and works in Berlin.

At the center of Ma Ke's work, one often finds the human form placed in seemingly surreal settings. In distorted representational forms, it assumes a strong presence in the picture: The bodies are frequently stretched vertically, and at times the heads are equipped with unnaturally high foreheads. Time and again, Ma Ke's characters seem to tamper with strange gadgets, some of which, conversely, seem to be connected to the body. Are the blocks Ma Ke shows attached to a figure's leg the McLuhanian machines of the electronic age? The media theoretician Marshall McLuhan views media as extensions of the human sensory apparatus, but also as amputations thereof. In his theories, he queries how mediality changes human beings and, with them, society, and how it thus directly determines human thought, action, and perception. Ma Ke was also heavily influenced by Chinese media policies and socialist realism, until he developed a wholly new way of perceiving at the Art Academy of Tianjin, liberated himself from restrictions, and found his way to his own artistic language. He received his MFA at the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in Beijing. Ma Ke was born in Zibo in the Shandong province. He lives and works in Beijing.

With her realistic paintings, Karin Kneffel captures a broad spectrum of subjects, which she approaches with a consistent distance and representational precision. Since the early 2000s, interiors and window pictures are two of the main focuses of her oeuvre. The reflections in polished floors, shimmering furniture, flat glass panels, television screens, or paintings within the painting create picture puzzles about recognizing interiors and exteriors, foregrounds and backgrounds, and past and present things. Kneffel transfers everything on the two-dimensional plane of the canvas, and freezes space and time in a single moment. Her expert use of lighting effects supports the undefinable nature and the mysterious atmosphere of her scenarios. They appear flash-frozen and are often reminiscent of stills from a film by David Lynch. Kneffel repeatedly uses the element of water, which sits on window panes in the form of droplets or rivulets and through which entire image spaces are revealed to the viewers. Sometimes colors and prop surfaces blaze up in the water spots. With this device, Kneffel's style of painting often shifts into the abstract. Karin Kneffel was a student in Gerhard Richter's master class and is a professor of painting at the Academy of Fine Arts, Munich.

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Andrew Palmer's abstract geometrical paintings resemble those of Thomas Helbig in their visual language. Much like in Helbig's works, the meandering, undefinable surfaces and lines of Palmer's paintings are often reminiscent of macrocosmic structures or conjure up microscopic images or geological formations. Symbolic places and worlds with ramified pathways emerge, which may either lie within us or outside, at a great distance from us. Geometric, seemingly weightless figures appear, while the image background shows through their transparent bodies. Foreground and background, the concrete and the abstract topple into each other. Palmer applies his material – oil paint, acrylic primer, varnish – not only to the canvas, but also to found rocks. The painted areas give the illusion of the rock formations' smooth, polished surfaces with their shimmering color spots and veining. They are a contrast to the rough, untouched areas on the rocks. Palmer copies forms and surface structures from nature and virtually competes with them in his paintings and objects. "Art is embedded in nature," as Albrecht Dürer already knew, and Hackel's *Art Forms in Nature* were already popular among artists at the previous turn of the century. Andrew Palmer was born in Salisbury, UK, and received his art diploma from the Slade School of Fine Art. He lives and works in London.

Qiu Ruixiang places the human form at the center of his work, much like his Chinese colleague Ma Ke. His protagonists appear to be immersed either in manual labor or in meditative physical exercise such as qigong, a Chinese system of concentration and movement used to train body and mind. The figures always emerge from a dark background of different colors, and are dramatically brought to life with a potent light source, which accentuates them from their surrounding and enhances the expression of their inner tensions. The characters are regularly alone as they are lost in their activities and, in their quiet emotionality, seem distant from the outside world. This effect is reinforced by a top view, which the artist sporadically uses and where, in a figurative sense, an omniscient narrator observes from above and from a distance. Ruixiang's figures emanate a contemplative, introverted aura. His works captivate viewers by their distinction from overly contemporary works and by their celebration of unobtrusive colorfulness and tranquility. Qiu Ruixiang studied at the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts. He was born in Shanxi and lives and works in Xi'an.

Thomas Zipp explores artistic, scientific, religious, and social utopias in his works, and in doing so discusses their hopes and promises as well as their failures. In expressing his associations, he uses not only the means of painting, but also frequently those of sketching, photography, photocopying, sculpture, and object work. He prefers to assemble the various media in programmatically space-filling installations. Moreover, Thomas Zipp also actively engages in music and text production. His "narrative conceptualism" draws on a plethora of stylistic means. Therefore, his works may be interpreted at times as ironic and humorous, at times as poetic and sensual, and even somber and melancholic. The representation of the conceptual plays an essential role in Zipp's paintings, distinguishing his paintings from loud, colorful pop paintings. Time and again, these concepts revolve around the themes of body and spirit, norm and deviation, the unconscious and the visionary. Psychological concepts, theories and research about the history of psychiatry à la Michel Foucault are Zipp's preferred topics of interest. His examination of historic art movements such as cubism, futurism, and surrealism is always tangible in his works. Thomas Zipp studied at the Städelschule in Frankfurt and at the Slade School of Fine Arts in London. He is professor of painting and multimedia at the Berlin University of the Arts.

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