

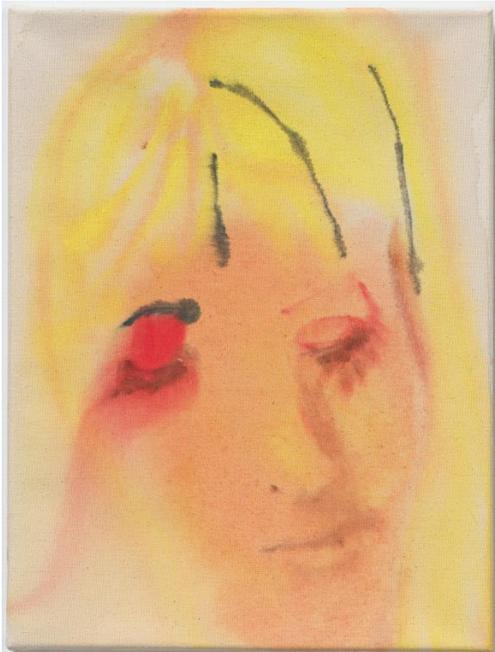
Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle

Helene Appel, Janis Avotins, Stephan Balkenhol, Steven Claydon, Martin Creed, Slawomir Elsner, Eberhard Havekost, Thomas Helbig, Leiko Ikemura, Alex Katz, Ma Ke, Goshka Macuga, Jan Merta, Florin Mitroi, Sophie Reinhold, Thomas Ruff, Thomas Struth, Florian Süßmayr, Thomas Zipp

Portraits

March 04 – Jun 26, 2021

online from March 4, 2021



Leiko Ikemura, *C.H.R.*, 2019, tempera on nettle, 40 x 30 cm. © Leiko Ikemura, VG Bild-Kunst Bonn 2021.

Devoted entirely to the portrait, this exhibition gathers a wide variety of creative expressions offered in this genre. To this day, the portrait has remained one of the most important, ever reinvigorated artistic forms of representation. It is a recurring figure in countless creative concepts. In light of the current lack of face-to-face encounters, it was with great enthusiasm that we delved into the subject of portraiture.

Thomas Ruff approached the subject in the 1980s, opting for a neutral representation of a frontal half-lengths free of any semblance of emotion, gesture, or facial expression. He showed the surface—but not the individual features—of the depicted person in large-format works, thus questioning the original intent of portrait photography. In contrast, Thomas Struth portrays individuals, couples, and families with a plate camera and long exposure. His images attest to the empathy with which he deals with his models; they evoke psychological depth and present the subjects in private and intimate surroundings, like 2007's *The Felsenfeld / Gold Families, Philadelphia*, shown in this exhibition.

Using his inimitably strong, abstract-leaning style of painting, Czech painter Jan Merta has created a haunting portrait of the writer and poet Daniil Kharmis. Merta expertly ties his work in with the Russian avant-garde, as if he himself were a member of the artist collective OBERIU, or Union of Real Art, which Kharmis cofounded.

Slawomir Elsner's new colored-pencil drawings also dazzle us with portraits of women whose detail and concomitant blur show icons of art history as well as everyday faces like hazy memories.

For the first time, we will be showing the poetic portraits from the oeuvre by Leiko Ikemura. In the traditional tempera technique she reacts, in a quick, trance-like gesture and often serially, to photographic artist portraits. This way, the same person may appear in different ways on the canvas, depending on the mood. It is above all the dreamlike atmosphere, which makes the works of the Japanese-Swiss artist so unique, that is also evident in the glass portrait heads of sleepers.

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A.O.: R is the title of the new sculptural portrait by Thomas Zipp and stands for Abstract Object, on whose shoulders the artist places an aggressive rolling R like an angry pet, in the spirit of Dadaism: as if the work reflected our current situation.

We are very happy to welcome so many “visitors”—in the form of paintings, photographs, and sculptures—and thank all participating artists for their contributions to this exhibition in particular, in these times of social distance.

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