

# Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle

Elif Saydam

## **Stealth**

Feb 23 – Apr 06, 2024

Opening: Thursday, Feb 22, 2024 / 6 – 9 pm



Elif Saydam, *A song of love*, 2024, 22.5 k gold, oil and UV print on Dibond. Ø 50 cm; photo: Joanna Wilk.

Elif Saydam's second solo show at Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle takes us into a world that runs under the radar. The title Stealth immediately gives the visitor a feel that something remains undiscovered here or is secretly concealed beneath the seductive surface of these paintings. Inevitably, one tries to discover this world. The circular images show details of ornamental Moorish patterns, marble floors, coffered ceilings, or other architectural elements from Spanish Andalusia, but also paradisiacal plants and fruit or details of plastic products from souvenir shops that imitate classic ceramics from another era, for example. The details are mirrored and superimposed, it is difficult to distinguish between what is painted or printed, what was artificially created or actually experienced. Occasionally a hand can be seen in the background, apparently holding a mirror. The works have been decorated with painted ornaments, flowers or gilded frames on what appears to be a printed surface. Elements appear from Islamic miniature painting, which Elif Saydam has been intentionally using decoratively for some time. Convex mirrors, familiar from street surveillance or protection against shoplifting, romp in these pleasurable reflective works in the exhibition. However, the mirror surface is covered with painted lattice grids and nostalgic stickers from the 1980s. They read in German: "There's a lot to do - let's get out of here" or "Unfortunately, we have to stay outside!" These approaches tie in with the work series "Zu spät", which featured photographic details of buildings with Berlin 24-hour Spätis and their façades. In some of them, slogans and flags from the political left or queer communities were also painted upon the surface, along with the familiar ornaments, as a way to address the canvas as a site for fantasy. This mix of "high" and subcultural aesthetics in the visual language, in which the living environment is composed of a diverse community, is typical for the artist's way of expression.

The term "stealth" is also a slang term to describe a person moving through a social order undetected and therefore afforded a certain level of security. In this way the title alludes to a feeling of discomfort and desire on several levels. The use of mirrors is an attempt to approach history and identity, but also illustrates the failure to ever be able to grasp them in their entirety. Painting serves here as a projection surface for the desire to relate with the world, to make one's own environment visible, without getting too close.

Elif Saydam (\*1985 in Calgary, Canada) studied at the Städelschule Frankfurt under Monika Baer and Amy Sillman until 2016. For 2024, the artist received the New York Scholarship from the Hessische Kulturstiftung. The exhibition "Eviction Notice" at the Oakville Galleries in Oakville was Elif Saydam's first major institutional solo show in Canada and was listed as one of the 10 most important exhibitions in 2023 by Frieze Magazine. Solo exhibitions at Kunsthal Thy in Denmark and Kunstverein Gießen are planned for 2025.

(Johanna Singer)

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**[www.galerie-schoettle.de](http://www.galerie-schoettle.de)**