

„Exfreundin“

16 October – 31 December 2020

Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

Soft Opening: Friday, 16 October 2020 | 4 pm – 9 pm

At the beginning of the year, I basically had enough of all the blinky blinky going on around me. So I thought to myself, now you do things the other way round. Make it really personal. I told a colleague that I wanted to do an exhibition about my ex-girlfriends. She laughed and said that she had just done a drawing of her ex-boyfriend. She took out her sketch book and showed me – a gorilla.

Quite funny, yet I would not be able to get away like this.

Because after all, as a man you are not supposed to do that kind of thing. Bam – my house, bam – my car, bam – my girlfriend. The clichés immediately start rolling. Male clichés. That is curious, but it is also telling: I am planning an exhibition about ex-girlfriends, and the problem is trying to avoid – not clichés about women, but clichés about men. The consequence: inhibitions, doubts, concerns. Also: what will my ex-girlfriends reactions be? And: will anyone else be interested?

This may sound like one of those points at which one should just turn around and do something else instead. But on the whole this proved to be a really good approach.

After all, problems, vacillations, being torn between wanting and not wanting to show, as well as fears – these are all things that can be negotiated using images. They operate in pictures and in the act of painting, especially in watercolour with its constant oscillation between substantiation and dissolution, between piling up and leaving out. I was curious myself what the results would be. So I made a start.

Now I am standing in front of the finished works. I have never understood what a narrative image is supposed to be. Pictures do not tell stories. There is nothing before or after the moment. Nevertheless, there are photos (surprisingly few, given the vast quantities I took over the course of those years) that contain a lot of what has been. What these relationships were. At least to me. Traces, likenesses of moments that happened.

The present works try to track these moments down. Not the photos. They (the images of this exhibition) are themselves moments that are associated with but do not become what took place. I can see them as independent images, detached from the moments to which they refer. But they still contain those moments. I also can see the images side by side with those moments and compare them with one another. Sometimes the images even seem to slide in front of my memories, as if seeking to replace them.

Who knows what will happen when you see them. Will they really communicate something personal? Will you be able to get close to those moments, or to similar moments of your own? Perhaps my moments will become yours. Just for a moment. Would be fine with me.

All the best,

Julian