

TIM VAN LAERE GALLERY

TOMASZ KOWALSKI **Routine investigation** **25 October - 1 December 2012**

Tim Van Laere Gallery is pleased to announce the second solo show of Tomasz Kowalski. In Routine investigation, he exhibits his most recent paintings, drawings and collages, all dated 2012.

Part of the surprising charm of Tomasz Kowalski's work is his idiosyncratic iconography. Through his personal imagination, everyday life experience morph into tragicomic stories, lending his imagery an enigmatic and psychedelic quality. Approaching his work as the personal diary of a paranoid person (like in Roman Polanski's *The Tenant*) can be a key to fully grasp it. It refers to a childlike sensitivity, to lose yourself in the paranoia of imaginations or hallucinatory visions. Kowalski compulsively works on the same unsettling subjects (illness, cleansing), theatre like scenes containing the same characters and requisites (wardrobes with ethereal clothes), examining iconic representations of objects and situations and its relation to real life.

It is hard today to find artists who are able to effortlessly come to terms with the art-historical and cultural traditions that anticipated them, and even harder to find any who can translate this into creative actions through an expressive medium. Tomasz Kowalski is one of the rare cases who pull this off. Using painting as his chosen communicative tool, he journeys to a past with rather generous boundaries, crowded with the most famous masters of German Expressionism (Otto Dix and George Grosz), pioneers of the geometric abstract art, Dadaism and Surrealism. These, in turn, are connected to an immense constellation which makes reference to both literature and graphic design. This includes the work of William Burroughs, Thomas Pynchon, Bruno Schulz which all represent a form of paranoid thinking about reality, full of conspiracies, fear and psychedelia. It is the combination of Kowalski's imagination, his figurative play on abstraction and his confident handling of paint, that give his work a unique vitality.

Born in 1984 in Szczepleszyn, Poland, Tomasz Kowalski lives and works in Krakow and Szczepleszyn. His work has been exhibited in solo shows at Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowskie Castle, Warsaw, Poland in 2011; Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Germany in 2009 and also in group shows at Kunsthalle Wien; De Appel, Amsterdam, Netherlands; MUMOK - Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Wien, Austria; S.M.A.K. Ghent, Belgium; De Garage, Mechelen, Belgium, Center for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, Poland; Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Hartware MedienKunstVerein, Dortmund, Germany; Ursula Blickle Foundation, Kraichtal-Unterwisheim, Germany. Tomasz Kowalski's work is included in important public collections such as Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; MUMOK - Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Wien, Austria; Frac des Pays de la Loire, Nantes, France; MOCAK, Museum of Contemporary Art, Krakow, Poland.