

KÖNIG GALERIE

ROBERT JANITZ | SPHINX

KÖNIG GALERIE | 29 APRIL – 2 JUNE 2023

On the occasion of Gallery Weekend Berlin 2023, KÖNIG GALERIE is pleased to present SPHINX, a solo presentation of work by Robert Janitz. The German-born, Mexico City-based painter has assembled a large body of unique abstract paintings over the last two decades, and SPHINX will serve as a survey of keyworks from the artist's career. Unique to the exhibition is a new reflective construction that will sit inside of the Nave space at St. Agnes, creating endless possible moments of correspondence and self-reflection within and between the works and visitors.

Janitz's unique language of abstract painting is based on a restricted vocabulary of elements: gradient backgrounds and vertical stripes that reflect a steady and methodical movement against their surfaces. The gestural traces of Janitz's forms operate according to complementary sets of limits—the edge of each canvas and the reach of an individual body. In this way, Janitz's practice is deeply performative, each singular painting functioning as a kind of transparent document of the actions that were used to create it. One development that becomes clear in SPHINX is the increasing complexity of each work's composition, reflecting an ever-greater degree of acumen and choreographic competence on Janitz's part.

What is displayed in this unique exhibition is the genus of abstraction in these paintings, informed early on by a desire on the artist's part to do away with the instant recognizability of portraiture. Indeed, Janitz began painting faces and using his approach to the direct, unmediated materiality of his brush to obscure likeness, until the point of almost total erasure. Following from the intense and intricate constructions of his "portraits", Janitz took great leaps in scale by painting canvases significantly larger than his own body, granting himself a newfound freedom and space along with it. As if constantly grasping at his own physical extremities, Janitz was able to completely reimagine the relationship between background and foreground, ultimately doing away with their distinction almost entirely. To see one of these later works is equivalent to tracing the movement of Janitz's gestures, bringing both process and presence into unparalleled equanimity with one another.

The sphinx is a mythical creature with a human head and the body of a lion that inspires fear and is not coincidentally perceived as a guardian. It asks riddles whose answer one must guess if one does not want to end in death. Borrowing this metaphor, Janitz installed a mirrored wall in the exhibition space whose logic of reflection is akin to posing a visual riddle related to the origin and sensation of the paintings as they sit before visitors. No doubt, the greatest enigma in the exhibition is the self-reflection that viewers cannot escape, lest vision be altogether brought to a close.

Robert Janitz (b. 1962 in Alsfeld, Germany) lives and works in Mexico City, Mexico. He studied Ethnology, Comparative Religion, Indology, and Art History at the Philipps University in Marburg, Germany. Janitz is known for his large abstract paintings for which he uses oil in combination with wax and flour on a monochrome background.

His works have been shown in many international solo and group exhibitions, amongst others in San Carlo, Cremona, Italy; Diego Rivera Museum Anahuacalli, Mexico City, Mexico; the Sevil Dolmaci Gallery in Istanbul, Turkey; the Canada Gallery, New York City, USA; KÖNIG GALERIE, Berlin, Germany; KÖNIG LONDON, London, UK; the Centre Regional Art Contemporain, Montbéliard, France; the PEANA, Monterrey, Mexico; the Archivo Collectivo, Mexico City, Mexico. His works are part of the following collections: SFMoMA, San Francisco, USA; Amorepacific Museum of Art, Seoul, South Korea; Bass Collection, Texas; Carole Server Collection, New York, NY; Collection VR d'Afflux, Paris, France; Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy; Hall Art Foundation, Reading, VT, USA; Tomio Koyama, Tokyo, Japan; Goetz Collection, Munich, Germany.

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EXHIBITIONS

MONIRA AL QADIRI
Crude Eye
KÖNIG GALERIE
29.04. – 02.06.2023

DAVID ZINK YI
Playing Until Failure
KÖNIG SEOUL
20.05. – 18.06.2023

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Tue – Sat 11 AM – 6 PM