

Toby Ziegler

Blind men exploring the skin of an elephant

46 & 57 rue du Temple, 75004, Paris

7 June – 29 July 2023

Opening: Wednesday, 7 June, 6 – 8 pm

Galerie Max Hetzler is pleased to present *Blind men exploring the skin of an elephant*, **Toby Ziegler's** fourth solo exhibition at its location in Paris. This exhibition brings together a range of recent works exploring the connections between figuration and abstraction, control and intuition, and manual and digital means of production. The disruption of established systems and the troubling fractures at play within the circulation of images are central themes in the artist's recent production.

The title of the exhibition refers to an old Indian parable, transcribed in the work of Hokusai, in which blind men are depicted petting different parts of an elephant, each believing it to be another distinct animal. The tale relates to the idea that each person defends their own belief as being absolute, based on their own limited subjectivity, regardless of the experience of others. To imagine the animal objectively, as a whole, would only be possible by merging these various perceptions. In Ziegler's work, the original image springs out of a similar disorder, with figurative elements and motifs subtracted, aggregated or enhanced via personal references. As in the Indian fable, multiple small, distinct elements are united to form one coherent whole.

Ziegler's creative process is sometimes one of incremental 'figuration' and sometimes one of abstraction, with different starting points but the same destination. His aim is to make work that self-consciously functions as both figurative and abstract at the same time. It involves the dismantling and deconstruction of imagery drawn from a variety of sources, adding or subtracting elements such as figurative details and patterns. The original representation is dissolved by the combined action of the artist's hand and technological manipulation. Thus, Ziegler creates a new genre of painting that is hybridised and recomposed, nourished by pictorial tradition and autobiographical elements. By exploring the painterly gesture subject to chance and intuition, in relation to digital modes of image making, the artist observes how machines imitate people and people imitate machines.

The exhibition at Galerie Max Hetzler juxtaposes two modes of painting. In both approaches imagery is built up through slow schematic processes, followed by quick, more spontaneous gesture, which is additive in one group of works, and takes the form of erasure in the other. Different temporalities thus lie in each individual work, with the slow, careful and creative phase often disrupted by gestures of disintegration.



Toby Ziegler, *36 views of my mother*, 2022
Photo: Todd White

Toby Ziegler (*1972, London) lives and works in London. Ziegler's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at international institutions such as the Stiftung zur Förderung zeitgenössischer Kunst, Weidingen (2022 and 2017); The Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart (2018); The Freud Museum, London (2017); The Hepworth Wakefield (2014); Zabłudowicz Collection, London (2010, travelled to The New Art Gallery Walsall; and Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki); Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield (2007); and Chisenhale Gallery, London (2005), among others. Toby Ziegler's works are part of renowned collections including Arts Council England, London; The British Council, London; The Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart; Tate, London; and the Zabłudowicz Collection, London.

Further exhibitions and events

Berlin:

23 June – 19 August 2023

Werner Büttner

Malerei 1981–2022

Bleibtreustraße 45 and 15/16, 10623

23 June – 19 August 2023

The Yellow Light at 6PM: Remembering, Envisioning, Sensing Landscape

A group exhibition curated by Christian Malycha

Goethestraße 2/3, 10623

9 June – 19 August 2023

Bridget Riley

Wall Works 1983–2023

Potsdamer Straße 77–87, 10785

London:

2 June – 29 July 2023

Thomas Struth

41 Dover Street, W1S 4NS

Marfa:

4 May – 10 December 2023

Grace Weaver

Indoor Paintings

1976 Antelope Hills Road

Press Contact

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