

KÖNIG GALERIE

GROUP SHOW | PLACES AND EVENTS

KÖNIG GALERIE | 13 SEPTEMBER – 04 NOVEMBER 2023

KÖNIG GALERIE is delighted to present the group exhibition PLACES AND EVENTS, which brings together a diverse array of new perspectives in the field of abstract art. The exhibition arrives at a timely moment following a renewed interest and energy around abstraction more generally. Like painting, conceptualism, installation, and numerous other genres of artistic practice, abstraction has had its fair share of endings and declines, only to re-emerge again and again. Its return now might not be as coincidental as it at first appears, for, historically, following years of successive and prolonged crises and global disruptions, abstraction has come to the fore precisely in moments when the depiction of reality feels more distressing than ever before. Abstraction can provide, if not an escape, at least a refuge – a space for distance, reflection, experimentation, and fresh outlooks.

One of the primary challenges posed by abstraction is how best to articulate its meaning. Describing something that is inherently indescribable and strives to elude definitions and distinct forms appears an almost insurmountable task. Yet, open conversation is an integral part of art. While abstraction impacts on an intuitive and associative level more than a mimetic one, the perceived lack of a shared vocabulary to discuss it can put the works in question in an uncomfortable position of alienating their audience. One potential remedy to this issue might be to reframe the language around abstract art in more familiar terms, such as those of places and events.

Imagine landscapes – cities, streets, nature, water, light, enclosed spaces, rooms filled with objects and remnants of stories – with the exception that these places have been removed from their geographical specificities, any lingering traces hinted at solely through gesture and color. Instead, of repeating a known or established map of real places, the artworks in this exhibition become integral components of a cartography of imaginary places and intellectual voyages. In this sense, the very idea of place is lifted from its referential duties and allowed to point to sites that may yet only exist within the frame of an artwork.

Next, imagine abstraction not as opposed to an object reality but as an event – a moment of occurrence, motion, and transformation. Whereas the reframing of place had more to do with the properties of space, the event focuses more on time: the temporal dimension of the works shown. In abstract art, time does not proceed linearly; it doesn't narrate stories with beginnings and endings. Instead, it follows its own distinct chronology. This character of abstraction reflects the specific nature of how we observe, comprehend, analyze, and perhaps most importantly, experience art.

These two dimensions – place and event – are not meant as devices for elucidating the art on view. Rather, they are introduced here as a means of establishing a path for the experience of this unique artistic language.

PLACES AND EVENTS features works by 19 emerging and established artists in the Showroom of KÖNIG GALERIE in Berlin. The exhibition's architecture mirrors the logic of the show – creating distinct thematic spaces each with a unique trajectory all their own.

Thematically, the exhibition is loosely organized into two possible points of entry and the trajectories that follow from them. The first commences (and concludes) with abstraction from the language in the works of GUILLERMO MORA and continues with the motif of repetition with foundational elements such as lines and grids in the pieces of SOPHIA DOMAGALA and ROBERT JANITZ. HEATHER DAY and XIYAO WANG's paintings evoke landscapes through a sense of journeying through time and space. Despite the obvious differences between the two art forms, both artists unravel their paintings with an attention to meter and rhyme akin to poetry. In a very different vein, RUDI NINOV makes paintings and ceramic sculptures that elevate mundane, inconspicuous objects to events of existential significance. In the space opposite, you'll find works by ANSELM REYLE, CLÉDIA FOURNIAU, and STANIMIR GENOV, each of whom

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EXHIBITIONS

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CHI HARU SHIOTA
The Wall Behind the Windows
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LEIKO IKEMURA
Soul Scape Seoul
KÖNIG SEOUL
02.09. – 11.11.2023

KÖNIG GALERIE | ST. AGNES
Alexandrinenstr. 118 -121,
10969 Berlin

T +49.30.261030 80
info@koeniggalerie.com
[koeniggalerie.com](https://www.koeniggalerie.com)

Tue – Sat 11 AM – 6 PM

employs light as an almost sculptural material in its own right. GENOV's work is based on rethinking and reliving personal experiences through the medium of painting. This process involves repetitive drawing and re-drawing, culminating in an apparent order, beneath which, however, the depth of multiple layers is felt as an interplay of light and shadows. FOURNIAU's visual language is based on layers of paint and resins, creating a drama between transparency and light on her surfaces. In his painting practice, REYLE combines oil with various found objects, including mirrored foil, that refracts light, incorporating reflections into the composition of the works themselves. The painterly gesture and interplay of light extend into more spatial investigations through a series of sculptures in colored mirrored bronze.

The second possible route opens with a distinct emphasis on the geometric order with CLAUDIA COMTE's work. COMTE employs forms of classical geometric abstraction as a foundation for forging entirely new and dynamic spaces within her practice. Her installations frequently exist in varying iterations and combinations, multiplying (and personalizing) the inherent freedom that the artist feels geometry is uniquely adept at offering. ALICE ANDERSON's works also move within the realm of geometric abstraction, albeit from its opposite pole, as a formal method of creation rather than the end result. Her art emerges not from a deliberate, intentional attempt to wield total control over the shape, color, and surface of her canvases, but rather as the products of a collective performance rooted in the philosophy of chance procedures, informed by ritual and an exploration of the spiritual. In a similar vein, RACHEL GARRARD paints on raw linen using natural pigments, such as hand-collected rock powder. Her paintings evoke spiritualized spaces reminiscent of Hilma af Klimt, incorporating philosophical, scientific, and cultural theory with deep psychogenic exploration, she has developed a symbolic visual language that intimately connects the internal with the cosmic and universal. The theme of spirituality with ANOUK LAMM ANOUK, who explores the concept of the temple as a site of serenity and tranquility, embodying one of the show's central ideas of abstraction as a place of refuge. CHIHARU SHIOTA offers another perspective on the spiritual as well as the search for reconciliation and retreat. Informed by personal experiences, memories, and trauma, SHIOTA constructs intricate systems where order and chaos coexist in a delicately precarious equilibrium. A similar paradox underlies the works by ANNETTE KELM: her abstract photographs represent the outcome of orchestrated moments of chance. The photographs show the lines of physical forces caused by the random scattering and piling of iron shavings on yellow and green paper backgrounds.

The two routes that run through St. Agnes converge and diverge at the hall's end, where works by MAX FRINTROP and JOHANNES WOHNSEIFER are showcased. FRINTROP's works are defined by bold, expressive gestures of emotion, conflict, and near ecstasy. WOHNSEIFER's works on the other hand engage with time, freezing moments of cultural production, referring both to contemporary visual culture and the role of painting today.

Building upon the concept of 'places and events,' the exhibition responds to the concrete space of St. Agnes, delving into its architecture. The arrangement of the concrete columns is mirrored and abstracted in the sculptures by BELLA RUNE, RUDI NINOV, ALICE ANDERSON, and DAVID ZINK YI. ANDERSON presents a sculpture in the tradition of Brancusi, which, much like her wall works, is not a result of geometric mastery over form and space, but a product of her performance, in which she re-thinks the connection between humans and newer modes of technology. BELLA RUNE's sculptures made from dyed silk mohair yarn and metal also evoke Brancusi, but they are radically different in their materiality. In their delicate precarity, they seem to disappear, creating an almost AR-like experience in physical space. With its fragility, uncertainty of form, and inherent playfulness, NINOV's ceramic sculpture opens the possibility of escaping the concreteness of the brutalist architecture that surrounds it. DAVID ZINK YI's works operate in a similar vein, though they do so in a horizontal as opposed to a vertical register. ZINK YI creates large-scale ceramic sculptures that challenge our perception of space, solidity, and material through their organic forms, plasticity, and extraordinary painterly surfaces. His works capture a frozen moment of motion, the result of an intimate and intense dialogue between the artist and his art.

Curated by Stefka Tsaneva.

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