

Galería Ehrhardt Flórez

ANDRÉ BUTZER

From March 7th to May 4th, 2024

A few months ago, on the occasion of the exhibition that the Thyssen Bornemisza Museum dedicated to André Butzer, professor and art historian Rocío Robles wrote: 'André Butzer is André Butzer is André Butzer...' This announced an unmistakable path of the painter's intentions, statements, and accounts of his work.

Of course, this repetition of his name indicates a painting which, posed as a space between the universe and the earth, alludes to existence itself, to poetry, and to the entirety of human art. Butzer's totalising vision of visual art, beauty, and aesthetics corresponds to the proportions and relationships between colours and planes.

It is as if the present had no relation to him; in his painting there is a certain timelessness. It takes place in a suspended time. The same time which seems to give shelter to the characters in his paintings, which, without spatial references, float in the 'infinite flatness and saturation of colour.'

This new exhibition at Ehrhardt Flórez Gallery presents two different types of work: four large paintings on canvas belonging to what are known as 'Portrait paintings,' and a group of eight works on paper distributed in two of the exhibition rooms. André Butzer's painting does not represent as much as invoke. It questions the status of mere representation and interprets the meaning of the visual field from a more philosophical angle. In Butzer's vision, there is no distinction between the figurative and the abstract; everything forms a unity under which most of the contradictory elements of the world are reintegrated.

Though they maintain some of the compositional and 'iconic' keys typical of this set of works in recent years, the *Portrait Paintings* we can see in this exhibition propose and advance certain novelties. The figures and backgrounds articulate into a flat, suggestive pictorial plane or surface. Depending on the postures of the figures who appear powerfully in the paintings, the direction in which they look or to which they tilt their heads, the paintings seem to have more frontal or more lateral compositional and structural developments. The masses of colour on the faces portrayed are placed, floating, on coloured backgrounds, which in their unity, create vigorous mixtures and combinations in which the limits of the superimposed colours are confused, contributing, in their definition and flat and firm backgrounds, to a new type of painting of rounded forms and flattened volumes. The colours that build the background of these new paintings overflow from their own form, giving rise to a bricked surface of cubes flattened with exuberant and dense brushstrokes in different directions. Intense oranges, emeralds, blues, pinks and violets, greens and yellows. In this Matisian pictorial system, Butzer's paintings mark certain constants in their composition, in which the colours are not only juxtaposed but kept separate and balanced on the flat surface of the canvas. There is a dramatic tension between the background and the figure that opens up a new form of abstraction. The forms and themes exceed the individuality of the artist as subject; indeed, as the artist himself has declared: 'My paintings have nothing to do with me.'

Also dated from 2023, the works on paper, with their open, vertiginous dynamics and rhythm, are combined with the more 'closed,' solid, and firm space of the paintings on canvas. The colourful compositions of these eight vibrant pieces, full of small brushstrokes, presents a pictorial harmony and coherence in which the flat colours, at times more mixed, at others dissolved, manifest a new form of colourful construction. The brushstrokes in these works are loose and widely spaced. In the small dimensions of the paper, the touches or surfaces of colour, although numerous, do not saturate the pictorial space but free it up; they seem not to occupy it as much as enlarge or amplify the white that remains between the almost divisive brushstrokes, which at times tend to merge and at others isolate themselves. As Matisse and Derain argued in their conversations which gave rise to Fauvism in Collioure in 1905, brushstrokes and colours are intimately related and enjoy an inherently parallel existence, thus enabling a highly independent and liberated vision.

In André Butzer's painting we find what we could call, reinterpreting some of the fundamental questions of Matisse's early Fauvism, a 'unitary workmanship' which engenders an almost unknown way of seeing and painting: 'There is no language for what I do. What I try to paint takes place before or after the existence of language.'

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BIO

André Butzer (Stuttgart, 1973) lives and works in Rangsdorf, Germany.

He counts among the most striving German contemporary artists.

André Butzer paints brightly colored grids, intensely black cosmic landscapes and monumental wide-eyed, white-gloved innocent figures. While explicitly an expressionist painter, the breadth of Butzer's body of work reveals a tremendous amount of evolution in practically all aspects of his craft: style, medium, composition and subject matter.

Butzer's act of painting is inextricably linked to the experience (life, death, society and mass entertainment), so much so that one becomes a self-reflection of the other in a seemingly endless cyclical paradigm. His works speak not only to his dream-like Nasaheim (a combination of NASA & Anaheim) but also to the politics and history that created these fantasies – what he calls 'Science Fiction Expressionism.'

Every new iteration of style or subject is influenced by what came before it, the past always brings us to the present and future of painting.

With influences as varied as Paul Cézanne, Edvard Munch, Henri Matisse, Walt Disney or Willem de Kooning; Butzer has developed a unique fictional universe.

Since 1996, his paintings have been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions in institutions as: Museo Thyssen Bornemisza; Kunstverein Friedrichshafen Friedrichshafen, Alemania; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo IKOB en Eupen, Bélgica; Kestnergesellschaft en Hannover, Alemania; Kunsthalle Nuremberg, Alemania; Kunstverein Reutlingen, Alemania; Museo de la Luz, Hokuto, Japón; Växjö Konsthall en Växjö, Suecia; y Museo YUZ, Shanghai, China.

His works are part of collections, such as: the Taschen Collection, Cologne; the Art Institute of Chicago; Carré d'Art, Nîmes; Contemporary Art Collection of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn; Deichtorhallen Hamburg; Hall Art Foundation, Reading; Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin State Museums, Berlin, Germany; Nationalgalerie / Hamburger Bahnhof –Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; LACMA, Los Angeles; MOCA, Los Angeles; Paula Modersohn-Becker Museum, Bremen; Rubell Museum, Miami; YUZ Museum, Shanghai.

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