

Markus Amm

Hanging Light

5th June — 20th July

Herald St is pleased to announce *Hanging Light*, an exhibition of new paintings by Markus Amm. Taking place in the gallery's East London premises, the presentation will feature a dozen works on gesso board, a support developed by the Geneva-based, German artist as part of an idiosyncratic and technical method of working carefully honed over the last twelve years. *Hanging Light* is Amm's seventh exhibition at the gallery since joining its roster in 2005.

Amm begins each work by stretching canvas over a wood panel and building layers of gesso, sanding between each application. The resulting surface has a chalky smoothness, over which thin washes of luminous oil pigments are brushed and spread. An alchemic suffusion forms between the porous tableau and wet paint, eventually crystallising into swathes of colour passages which seem to swoop over and under and merge into one another. Amm's practice has roots in collage and analogue photography, and he likens his process to the chemistry of developing images. There is a temporal element to his work, as the dozens of strata require drying, and waiting. The silky, light-imbued surfaces give way to dark scumbled crusts on the edges, sometimes polished and at other times left raw, revealing the artist's hand and adding a sculptural dimension to the object-paintings.

Previously left untitled for over a decade, Amm has recently started naming his works. Like his compositions, the titles are not to be taken too literally – each piece sitting in a liminal space between abstraction and figuration, with ghostly forms sparking associations. Are we imagining the verdant fields, or the body parts, which seem to emerge from the blushes of greens or sensual reds? Amm describes the act of viewing his paintings as a game, a metamorphosis, or an activation. *Schwarzwald (Black Forest)* might evoke deep night skies cut through by ribbons of light, with a mossy ground murmuring below. *Jazz Baby* offers a warmer, more intimate glow, with scarlets and vermillions mixing in a smoky haze. In the titular painting, hot clouds float through a cold atmosphere of shifting ceruleans and periwinkles. The names are at turns floral, sharp, and aerial, adding an intensity and vibration to the works.

Amm intends the exhibition title to be taken primarily as an action, the image of hanging a light as a metaphor for his ritual of painting. In its original German, *Ampel* can also mean a traffic light, and is derived from the same word in Latin signifying the eternal light found in a church or graveyard. Diverting from his previous confrontations with pure abstraction, this recent body of work is infused with a new level of understanding, a mood dousing the sheets of gesso and films of paint patiently and attentively layered over time.

Text by Émilie Streiff

Herald St

Front space

(Anti-clockwise)

Genevan Patchouli

2024

Oil and gesso on board
60 x 50 cm / 23.6 x 19.7 in
HS20-MA8691P

Black Ascending

2024

Oil and gesso on board
35 x 30 cm / 13.8 x 11.8 in
HS20-MA8686P

Vertex

2024

Oil and gesso on board
50 x 45 cm / 19.7 x 17.7 in
HS20-MA8688P

Back space

(Anti-clockwise)

Hanging Light

2024

Oil and gesso on board
50 x 45 cm / 19.7 x 17.7 in
HS20-MA8690P

Almine

2024

Oil and gesso on board
50 x 45 cm / 19.7 x 17.7 in
HS20-MA8692P

Avian

2024

Oil and gesso on board
50 x 30 cm / 19.7 x 11.8 in
HS20-MA8693P

Rund um die Sonne

2024

Oil and gesso on board
30 x 35 cm / 11.8 x 13.8 in
HS20-MA8687P

Jazz Baby

2024

Oil and gesso on board
35 x 30 cm / 13.8 x 11.8 in
HS20-MA8684P

Schwarzwald (Black Forest)

2024

Oil and gesso on board
30 x 35 cm / 11.8 x 13.8 in
HS20-MA8682P

Inner Drilling

2024

Oil and gesso on board
35 x 30 cm / 13.8 x 11.8 in
HS20-MA8683P

Markus Amm (b. 1969, Stuttgart) lives and works in Geneva. Recent exhibitions include *How Much Paint Is in a Painting*, David Kordansky Gallery, New York (2024); *From Southern German Modernity to International Contemporary Art*, Daimler Art Collection, Berlin (2021); *Spring*, Fondation Thalie, Brussels (2021); *Part One*, Herald St, London (2021); *Kunsthau Baselland*, Basel (2017); *Flatten A Wall*, Sammlung Lenikus, Vienna (2015); *Conversations in and Around Abstract Painting*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2014); *Die geometrie der dinge*, Gesellschaft Fuer Aktuelle Kunst, Bremen (2013); *Only Here - The Federal Republic of Germany's Contemporary Art Collection*, Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn (2013); *Nothing Turned Itself Inside Out*, White Flag Projects, St Louis (2013); *Actual Fact / Factual Fact*, Märkisches Museum, Witten (2012); *Kunstmuseum Stuttgart* (2010); and *Nothing to say and I am saying it*, Kunstverein Freiburg (2009). His work is included in the collections of the Kunstmuseum, Stuttgart; the Bundeskunstsammlung; and the Dallas Museum of Art.