

Galería Ehrhardt Flórez

PEPPI BOTTROP

Ángel izquierda/ Diablo derecha (Deus sive natura)

From September 12th to November 8th 2024

'There are two problems in painting: -observed Frank Stella- one is to find out what painting is and the other is to find out how to make a painting.' Peppi Bottrop confronts these two problems and others that arise from them in deed and on the pictorial plane.

In his second exhibition in Madrid, which is presented at Galería Ehrhardt Flórez under the title *Angel left / Devil right (Deus sive natura)*, a marked duality is posed: some things happen on one side, others on the other.

Representing a significant turning point in relation to his previous output, this exhibition presents a completely new and unprecedented body of work divided into three types.

Firstly, a selection of paintings made in 2021, which, although as yet unexhibited, are in tune with Bottrop's more recognisable production. While more a continuation of previous periods, they incorporate new questions related to language, signs and numeration. Secondly, in another of the rooms, we find two large paintings, dated the same year, 2024, facing two diptychs, one horizontal and the other vertical, clearly and directly revealing the initial duality of the exhibition.

Two of these paintings, with dark, grey and black backgrounds, move away from a purely visual approach, which is to say that the pictorial space opened up by these paintings is accessible from realms other than that of vision. The application of the paint, more liquid than in previous works, now drapes over the surface like a cloak, which is here an additional support or surface for other optical layers which, as Greenberg, for example, argued when talking about Noland or Louis '[...] open up and expand the pictorial field [...]' The painting steeped in optical limits now takes place in a vast field where language, thought and vision act on one another. These dark landscapes, 'all over' paintings, are also where plant motifs, flowers, moons and all manner of fantasies and optical delusions appear.

In front of them hang two pairs of diptychs. In them, purely from memory, Bottrop painted, for the first time, figurative, or rather realistic, images of barbed wire running horizontally and vertically across the canvases. This new painting, abstract yet representational, penetrates into other spaces, maintaining the gestural mode but becoming more 'impersonal' and objective in its execution. It is referential to the image it represents and self-referential as a synthesis of all the gestures, lines and knots that have articulated Bottrop's painting over the years. It is almost a macro gesture of focus, scale and heightened perception that shows barbed wire in detail as a conduit or compositional path of the painting. This new work, alluding to the image, is both pictorial and literal. The idea of representation and its pictorial interpretation, as with Jasper Johns' early flags, becomes recognisable as an image, thus allowing for a distancing and abstraction of the motif in the direction of a game where contradiction and paradox, irony and allegory coexist. With these paintings entitled 'Barbed wire', in a linguistic exercise of textual allusion to the motif represented, Bottrop rethinks certain paradigms, which, in opposition, mediate one of the most essential transformations of our recent art.

From a historical perspective, Bottrop's painting seems to relocate, in a certain sense, the paradigm of the late 1950s, when the ambiguity of Johns or Stella, or Noland or Louis, united the legacy of the New York School, shredded and deconstructed, with the adoption (innovative at the time) of Duchampian provocation.

While these new works by Bottrop reveal something of the signature brushstroke which has characterised part of his previous paintings, he unexpectedly and suddenly isolates the represented and recognisable image, achieving total abstraction. It is these representational games that make language and image the renovating elements of his recent work.

San Lorenzo, 11 28004 –Madrid

+34 91 310 44 15
galeria@ehrhartdflorez.com
www.ehrhardtflorez.com