

Raphaela Simon

Shelter from the cold

46 & 57, rue du Temple, 75004

18 January – 22 February 2025

Opening: Saturday, 18 January, 6 – 8pm

Galerie Max Hetzler, Paris, is pleased to present *Shelter from the cold*, a solo exhibition of work by **Raphaela Simon**. This is the artist's sixth solo presentation with the gallery, and her second in the Paris space.

Presenting eleven new paintings and one sculpture, *Shelter from the cold* continues Simon's enquiry into questions of physicality and bodily autonomy in her signature style, depicting simple, contextless forms against monochromatic backdrops. Playing with our desire to imbue forms with meaning, the works vacillate between hot and cold, exposure and shelter, figuration and abstraction.

Simon paints in several stages, overpainting and altering elements in a continuous process that allows traces of previous layers to seep through. In the present compositions, subjects are rendered against viscous black and deep red, drawing the viewer's gaze into the void while simultaneously asserting the painting's material solidity.

Several compositions depict heads subjected to degrees of confinement or cold. In *Fall*, two mask-like heads tumble to unknown depths, while *Icebox* renders them imprisoned in an icy cage. Two further heads are plunged into water in *The Bathers*, conveying both a sense of psychic entrapment and an awareness of volume and surface tension. The painting's title encapsulates the artist's signature wit: in place of Cézanne's renowned painting of leisurely bathers, Simon delivers a hostile plunge.

The fabric sculpture *Eishaut*, 2022, with its long, limp arms and broad shoulders, appears simultaneously soft and solid, its pale blue skin evoking the slippery tactility of ice. 'What lies underneath is decisive for what lies on top,' Simon explains. 'Inflated, soft forms emerge. Things threaten to burst. Other parts sag or shrivel, are tortured and marked by folds and seams.'¹

Beyond their existential dimension, these works convey Simon's keen interest in materials and patterns, particularly those found in the everyday. In *Shelter from the cold* and *Shelter from the out*, gridded lines in pink, red and black assume sculptural volume, suggesting the warm padding of a winter jacket – an enclosure or shelter of a safer kind. Polka dots, too, have both innocent and foreboding associations; they appear on a pair of boots radiating with heat and, in another composition, stand in for teeth surrounding a gaping mouth. Finally, two



Raphaela Simon, *Shelter from the cold*, 2024
Photo: def image

¹ R. Simon, *Raphaela Simon: Paintings and Sculptures 2012–22*, Berlin/New York/Los Angeles: Galerie Max Hetzler/Michael Werner Gallery/Hannah Hoffmann Gallery, 2022, p.254 (illustrated in colour).

abstract vortexes reference the blue checkerboard paintings which first appeared in Simon's oeuvre in 2016. Slightly unsteady, as if balancing themselves at the bottom of the canvas, these forms throw art historical ideas about simple geometries off kilter. Simon's subjects endlessly redefine their contours, daring the viewer to decode them while tapping into the uncanny.

Raphaela Simon (b. 1986, Villingen) lives and works in Berlin. Simon studied under Peter Doig at the Düsseldorf Art Academy and was part of Günther Förg's class at the Munich Academy of Fine Arts. She has been exhibiting regularly with Galerie Max Hetzler since 2016. The artist's work has been presented in institutional solo exhibitions at Oldenburger Kunstverein (2024); Fondazione Giuliani, Rome (2023); Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (trio show, 2022); and institutional group exhibitions at Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn (2022); and Daimler Contemporary, Berlin (2021), among others.

Further exhibitions and events

Berlin:

17 January – 22 February 2025

Toby Ziegler

Bleibtreustraße 45, 10623

17 January – 22 February 2025

Rinus Van de Velde

Goethestraße 2/3 and Bleibtreustraße 15/16, 10623

20 February – 12 April 2025

Elmgreen & Dragset

Momentan nicht erreichbar

Potsdamer Straße 77-87, 10785

London:

14 January – 22 February 2025

On Paper

41 Dover Street, W1S 4NS

Press Contact

Galerie Max Hetzler

paris@maxhetzler.com

Paris: +33 1 57 40 60 80

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