

SHIFTING

**Maja Bajević, Travis Boyer, Fabian Marti,
Kenrick McFarlane, Paul Mpagi Sepuya,
Tobias Spichtig, Christine Streuli**

January 25 – March 29, 2025

Opening: Friday, January 24, 6pm – 8pm

Zahnradstrasse 21, Zurich (Maag)

Galerie Peter Kilchmann is pleased to start the year with the group exhibition *Shifting*, which addresses aspects of demarcation, deconstruction, or dissolution of boundaries. This phenomenon refers to a process that causes previously established limits to blur or potentially disappear, in various contexts—on global, societal, individual, and conceptual levels. At the same time, the term describes a state in which barriers are shifted by progress: these shifts can lead to an exploration of the subconscious, new conceptions of society, identity, and gender. Seven artists are at the center of this group exhibition, developing strategies through their works to describe, question, and translate this act of shifting into their respective media. Works by Maja Bajević, Travis Boyer, Fabian Marti, Kenrick McFarlane, and Paul Mpagi Sepuya engage in a dynamic dialogue, complemented by two new positions: Tobias Spichtig and Christine Streuli, both offering a preview of their solo exhibitions planned for later this year.

Maja Bajević (*1967, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina; lives and works in Paris) is represented in the exhibition with two embroideries, *Facts and Figures*, 2024 (95 x 130 cm) and *Facts and Figures*, 2024 (95 x 170 cm). These textile works are based on an earlier work, *Arts, Crafts and Facts*, which was first created for the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015. The title *Facts and Figures* references the statistical data that serve as sources for these embroideries, while the term “figure” hints at the representation of women. Through this body of work, Bajević addresses the gender pay inequalities in Europe, embedding embroidered diagrams onto delicate floral patterns that evoke domestic interiors rather than the austere aesthetic of statistical data. A deliberate shift occurs as she juxtaposes factual diagrams with decorative motifs, imbuing them with an unexpected softness. A second layer of transformation is introduced through the use of augmented reality, which animates the statistical data within the digital realm, adding a dynamic, interactive dimension to the works.

Travis Boyer (*1979, Fort Worth, Texas; lives and works in New York City) is known for his vividly colored, sensuous paintings created through the application of dye on silk velvet. Using a meticulously developed technique—working on both sides of the velvet —Boyer achieves the distinctive depth, mesmerizing color gradations, and unique reflective qualities of his works. The artist draws from a wide array of pop culture references and themes of queer discourse, seamlessly integrating these into his creations. Employing hairstyling methods, Boyer sculpts and shapes the soft texture of the velvet, transforming it into a dynamic surface. His motifs are often drawn from his daily life and frequently carry sexual connotations: painted fruits, plants, or objects evoke bodily structures and phallic forms. By doing so, Boyer intentionally engages with the tactile quality of his works, provoking viewers' desire to touch them. Boyer is scheduled to present a solo exhibition in the gallery at Rämistrasse 33 in June.

Fabian Marti (*1979, Fribourg, Switzerland; lives and works in Paris and Zurich) has created works for *Shifting* that highlight fatherhood and childhood—a state in which creativity and expression can flow freely and unrestrained. Five flat sculptures, *Such a good boy* (each 1000 x 770 x 6 mm) protrude from the wall, depicting the silhouette of the artist's son being lifted into the air by one leg, and is seemingly plunging head over into the opposing paintings with titles such as *Lullaby Essentials (Happy Deggosaurus, 100 x 80 cm)* or *Lullaby Essentials (Dream Feed II, 50 x 50 cm)*—thereby initiating a discourse on new perspectives. Imprinted in the brass sculptures are handprints of the artist and his son, created through an etching process using lemon juice concentrate. The paintings are designed to engage with the imagination of children, drawing inspiration from lullabies, dreams, and the wonder of childhood fantasy. Through his work, Marti invites the audience to reconsider traditional methods of creation, conventional forms of exchange, and even the role and status of the artist, challenging these notions and prompting fresh perspectives.

Kenrick McFarlane (*1990, Chicago, USA; lives and works in Paris and Los Angeles) is featured by three new paintings, among others, that draw their motifs from sacred spaces, focusing on depictions of saints. True to his artistic approach, he transposes these figures into the realm of contemporary pop culture, portraying them with a visibly radiant aura and halo. Carl Gustav Jung's psychoanalytic theory (1912) posits that the psyche is composed of polarities or opposites, such as light/darkness, consciousness/unconsciousness, persona (mask)/shadow (repressed aspects), and order/chaos. Drawing on Jung's framework, McFarlane explores the shadow side—the repressed and unconscious elements that, according to Jung, saints also possess. The artist paints ambivalent beings that exist on a spectrum between saintly and demonic, continuously undergoing transformation.

Paul Mpagi Sepuya (*1982, San Bernardino, CA; lives and works in Los Angeles) focuses on the fragment in 'Studio photography' in his three displayed works, while continuing to emphasize the intersections of ethnicity, gender, and desire in the history of portrait photography. The fragments—disjointed limbs, hidden facial features, and uncertain relationships between body parts—are deliberately chosen by the artist. Through these fragments, he aims not to show less, but to reveal more, making the studio situation more visible, involving the viewer, and offering new perspectives. For example, *Mirror Study (0X5A4261)*, 2019 (127 x 190.5 cm) presents a self-portrait of a camera in the gallery: the artist has fragmented photographic excerpts and attached them to a mirror, then photographed the result. Body fragments nearly dissolve in the red-violet light, blurring. The camera is always present, functioning as both actor and motif.

Tobias Spichtig (*1982, Sempach, Switzerland; lives and works in Zurich and Berlin) presents a new painting, and a sculpture titled *Calla and Max* (2020). The artist paints his portraits in sharp, reduced lines, anonymizing the figures and giving them a gaunt, elongated appearance. Their obsessive, beautifully painted and simultaneously eerie features create an atmosphere that oscillates between mysticism, underlying discomfort and adoration. In a conscious countermovement to artistic conventions, Spichtig combines Goth aesthetics, references from the sacred space, and art-historical references, generating a palpable dissonance. At first sight they are reminiscent of paintings from the 1950's or pop portraiture, they take a form of their own, a personal style. For his sculptures, the artist uses second-hand clothing, often from friends, which he immerses in resin and occasionally coats with nickel, or other metals as seen in *Calla and Max*. Spichtig's sculptural approach recalls a certain existentialist quality like the delicate and emaciated works of Alberto Giacometti, though unlike Giacometti they do not appear as distant walkers but instead as radical present ghosts. Spichtig's first solo exhibition in the gallery will open in June at Zahnradstrasse 21.

Christine Streuli (*1975, Bern, Switzerland; lives and works in Berlin) is currently featured at Haus Konstruktiv Museum (Zurich) with a monumental installation that bears her unmistakable signature: her "all-over" paintings—large-scale, color-intensive, and ornamental works that often incorporate the walls of the exhibition spaces. Her works appear as vibrant manifestations that absorb and transform various cultural influences. For the exhibition *Shifting*, Streuli has created new works on canvas that engage with the deconstruction of Max Bill's oeuvre. The striking geometric color fields and black lines—whether vertical, horizontal, or diagonal—are adapted and reinterpreted by Streuli to reframe the foundations of geometric abstraction. In her approach, the boundaries between precise line work and the spontaneous formation of shapes blur. Both elements—the planned and the accidental—merge seamlessly in her paintings. Through this balance, the artist succeeds in creating a visual dynamism that captivates the viewer. A solo exhibition of Christine Streuli's work will open in September in the gallery in Zahnradstrasse 21.

With the exception of Paul Mpagi Sepuya, all artists will be present at the opening. For more information, please contact: inquiries@peterkilchmann.com