

## Toby Ziegler

### ESCAPISM

Bleibtreustraße 45, 10632 Berlin

17 January – 22 February 2025

Opening: Friday, 17 January, 6 – 8pm

Galerie Max Hetzler is pleased to announce *ESCAPISM*, a solo exhibition of new works by **Toby Ziegler**, at Bleibtreustraße 45 in Berlin. This is the artist's ninth solo exhibition with the gallery.

Memory and the passing of time have long been two of the central themes in Ziegler's work. In his practice, the artist combines figurative and abstract elements, computer modelling and painting, careful planning and chance. In his preparatory modelling of the images on the computer, a process which he describes as both alienating and mathematical, Ziegler builds non-narrative scenes. He creates a sense of stillness within his compositions, comparable to Dutch Old Master paintings, or the work of Giorgio Morandi and Vilhelm Hammershøi, where the experience of a long stretch of time is compressed into a single image.

One of the entry points of the current series of works is elements taken from family photographs, which Ziegler has altered and transposed into imagined spaces. At times remaining visible and at others all but disappearing, these figures serve as gateways into certain moods and memories.

Painting over the initial printed image in countless layers of transparent colours, Ziegler further modifies the appearance of the work. This build-up of transparent paint causes the lighter works to become increasingly pale and the darker works to deepen. The paint obscures what is underneath, leaving just the ghost of an image. Finally, painting over certain details, Ziegler emphasises patterns and surfaces, adding to the complex layered structure of his compositions.

Beneath the vibrantly coloured surface shapes in *Method acting*, 2024, a motif of stairs repeats in each part of the diptych. Rendered over two differently sized canvases, the steps appear to lead upwards out of the picture frame, amplified in the smaller part by the addition of a silhouetted figure in ascent. *Escapism*, 2024, is based on an image of a figure climbing from a barely visible armchair into an imagined fictitious landscape beyond the pictorial plane. Constructed from multiple visual layers of grids and shading, with overlaying hues of white, orange, black, blue and red, the painting appears to float in front of the wall, bound in neither space nor time.

In the short story *On Exactitude in Science* by Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges, which Ziegler mentions as an analogy for the work, a map is drawn so precisely that it ends up covering the entirety of the depicted territory, eclipsing the existing landscape with its own



Toby Ziegler, *Escapism*, 2024  
Photo: Peter Mallet

reconstruction. Ziegler's works similarly place visual layers over compositional constructs which are, in turn, based on scenes taken and reimagined from memory. Leaving a lingering effect, these building blocks become impossible to separate or fully perceive, with the viewer's subjective impression adding a final layer of meaning.

**Toby Ziegler** (b. 1972, London) lives and works in London. Ziegler's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at international institutions including the Stiftung zur Förderung zeitgenössischer Kunst, Weidingen (2022 and 2017); The Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart (2018–2019); The Freud Museum, London (2017); The Hepworth Wakefield (2014); Zabłudowicz Collection, London (2010, travelled to The New Art Gallery Walsall; and Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki); Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield (2007); and Chisenhale Gallery, London (2005), among others. Toby Ziegler's works are part of renowned collections including Arts Council England, London; The British Council, London; The Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart and Tate, London among others.

#### Further exhibitions and events

Berlin:

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

Paris:

18 January – 22 February 2025

**Raphaëla Simon**

*Shelter from the Cold*

46 & 57, rue du Temple, 75004

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