

MICHAEL MÜLLER

FRAGMENTE DER ZEIT

KÖNIG GALERIE | NAVE
1 MAY – 22 JUNE 2025

KÖNIG GALERIE is pleased to present a solo exhibition by the German-British artist Michael Müller. Under the title FRAGMENTE DER ZEIT ("Fragments of Time"), Müller deepens his painterly exploration of the ancient Greek myth of the Dioscuri, which he began in 2022 with the room-filling painting installation "Der Geschenkte Tag" at Frankfurt's Städel Museum. FRAGMENTE DER ZEIT is his first exhibition with the gallery and coincides with a large-scale installation at the Neues Museum on Berlin's Museum Island.

According to the Dioscuri myth, the unequal twins Castor and Polydeuces – sons of Leda, who were conceived in a single night by different fathers, one by the god Zeus, the other by the mortal Tyndareus – grew up as brothers of the beautiful Helen. Known as the Dioscuri, they were chronicled variously as Argonauts, heroes, legendary boxers and horse tamers, victors and fallen warriors, lovers, wanderers between worlds, and finally, constellations in the night sky. The brothers, one mortal and the other immortal, choose, out of love for one another, to share a single fate: After the mortal Castor fell in battle, the immortal Polydeuces asked his father Zeus to strip him of his immortality. Touched by the brothers' love, Zeus gifts them the opportunity henceforth to live together, alternating daily between Olympus, the realm of the gods, and Hades, the land of the dead, forever lingering on the uncertain threshold of life and death – being born and dying anew each day.

For FRAGMENTE DER ZEIT, Müller revisits this myth from a new perspective. Using abstract painting, his works capture "fragments" of this narrative, with allusion to specific events and situations from the lives of the Dioscuri, while still drawing on personal connections and questioning his own role vis-à-vis this intricate constellation.

Müller translates the mythical world of this narrative into a visible reality in varying degrees of transparency, as in the diaphanous surfaces of "Das Gemälde als Objekt" (2025) and "LPHY (Am Kreuz)" (2022/23), through to the more opaque, melancholic canvases of the black on black "Der erschöpfte Sigmar Polke" (2025). Between fiery red-orange visions of Hades and cloud-white depictions of Olympus ("Aides-Olymp Schwebebahn GmbH", 2022), Müller visualizes the Dioscuri's daily traversal of these worlds; the paintings embodying this torn apart state, arranged into unequal parts, as in "Sturz in einen anderen Raum, zur gleichen Zeit" (2021/22). Layers of visibility and invisibility reflect the complex relationships between the works: motifs from one painting reappear in another, some digitally altered and reprinted onto canvas, as in the diptych "Ein Werk, drei Bilder" (2022/24). These repurposed fragments then serve as foundations for further painterly elaborations, where gestures conceal some elements while revealing others. "In painting, I search for what cannot be seen," Müller explains. "An artist discovers what is initially invisible. Painting is about making that visible."

The souls dwelling in the underworld, the shadows of the deceased, haunt the darker works in FRAGMENTE DER ZEIT, while the supreme power of the Olympian gods calls into question the artist's authority over his own paintings. Ultimately, what in a work of art exists in perpetuity, and what is subject to the vagaries of time and decay? And what happens when one belongs to neither world – or to both at once – like the boundary-crossing Castor and Polydeuces? How does the meaning of ancient myths shift when they are reinterpreted in the present, transformed from the universal to the personal? What does the painter see in his own works, and what do the viewers perceive in turn? In Müller's words, "The gaze is not an objective, mechanical measurement. The eye moves, curiosity constantly shifts its focus. Sometimes the lens is clouded, sometimes clear. A thought places a filter upon it. A feeling, like a speck of dust, irritates the gaze." Is the glowing orange behind the darkest clouds in "Die Sehnsucht des unbestechlichen Fährmanns" (2025) a foreboding of the torments of hell, or the hopeful shimmer of the Olympian gods?

Müller unfolds, in dark colors, a multi-layered and allusive reflection on the meaning of time, mortality, and timeless love, continually weighing the possibilities and limits of abstraction while posing the crucial question: Can an abstract artwork tell a story?

– Gero Heschl

KÖNIG GALERIE

KÖNIG GALERIE
St. Agnes
Alexandrinenstrasse 118–121
10969 Berlin
Germany

OPENING TIMES
Tuesday – Sunday 11am – 6 pm
and by appointment

CONTACT
+49 30 261 030 80
info@koeniggalerie.com
Instagram: @koeniggalerie
www.koeniggalerie.com

FURTHER LOCATIONS
KÖNIG TELEGRAPHENAMT (BERLIN)
KÖNIG BERGSON (MUNICH)
KÖNIG MEXICO CITY
KÖNIG SEOUL