

Galería Ehrhardt Flórez

THILO HEINZMANN

One Another

From November 22nd to January 10th 2025

Under the title *One Another*, Galería Ehrhardt Flórez presents Thilo Heinzmann's eighth exhibition in Madrid. The exhibition consists of three different types of work: his recent sand paintings, a small group of his best-known pigment paintings (dated between 2024 and 2025), and an example of his series *Aicmo* (pieces made on aluminium supports).

In general terms, certain fundamentals of painting such as colour, gesture, and composition continue to be decisive in Heinzmann's work. Yet with its marked conceptual impulse, his work also possesses a strong material development and is fully susceptible to humour, surprise, and emotion. It is formulated both from mechanistic models of form and from organicist models; procedurally, it proposes a radicalism in the tracing of marks, gestures, brushstrokes, and interventions, which are carried out indiscriminately with various tools and brushes, as well as with the artist's own hands and fingers.

Far from being formless, as Georges Bataille suggested, the material in the new sand paintings is not expunged or placed beyond forms and reason, but is, instead, anchored to an idea; an idea that alludes to the relationships between things and a certain approximation to the experience of painting around terms and expressions such as up-down, inside-outside, through or in-between.

The sand pieces feature a stark economy of colours, broken up by the use of atmospheric dust and a multitude of glass fragments scattered throughout. The painting, conceived as an indivisible whole, now displaces real space to embark on a new journey towards its own autonomy. The phenomenological nature of these works harbours questions related to sight, perception, and touch. The traces of brushes dragging colour across the surface are clearly visible, as are those of fingers scratching the paint, achieving more than just effects, but an atmosphere, a material sensation. With bright, iridescent reflections, the blackish material is arranged on a rough surface full of particles of sand and coloured glasses, leading this new painting to encompass a larger set of operations. And it is not so much sand excavated and extracted from the earth as another, more mysterious kind which, in the artist's words, floats and falls. Lucio Fontana's *Tagli*, which have sometimes been invoked in reference to Heinzmann's work, are not as relevant now as his sculptural practice from the late 1940s, a more underrated aspect of the Italian artist's oeuvre with which Heinzmann's new works establish a more direct material connection. Many of those sculptures also occupied an uncertain space between matter and humour, and it is precisely these two senses that Heinzmann has paid the most attention to.

Yet, and in relation to the other type of works on display, in those belonging to his series of pigment paintings, the idea of material and temporal unity responds to the use of a pigment that is not so much applied as transposed. In these works, especially in those included in this exhibition, which are much more restrained in terms of gesture, colour, and expressiveness, the multiple material particles use their internal and specific vibrations to construct constellations suspended in time, seeming to echo something long since past. Each tiny element incorporated into the surface – the pigment particles (mineral and metallic), the fragments of coloured glass, the combinations of wet and dry materials, both in liquid and powder form – seek a precise equivalence in size, arrangement, and placement. There is a sense of beauty, in the sense of a desire for harmony between the parts, and in the relationship of proportion between things. Yet, at the same time, understood almost as a joke, we detect an approximation to infinity, confronting the antagonistic visions of the beautiful and the sublime on the same pictorial surface.

Incorporated into the installation alongside other works, the piece from the *Aicmo* series hangs suspended in one of the corners of the gallery. This work is an example of how, in this series, the supports have grown increasingly irregular in terms of shape and contour, and have become more complex in their pursuit of aspects such as light, shadow, dimensionality, and space. In this particular case, the cut and perforated aluminium also houses pieces of leather, and, with one foot still in the pictorial logic, the work leans once again towards the condition of object, thus questioning the very conception of the work of art, its function, its meaning.

If, as we have pointed out before, the conceptual lies at the very root of Thilo Heinzmann's pictorial practice, we should not forget the playful dimension of his work. Sensuality, contemplation, beauty, excitement, and understanding the creative process as a whole bring an element of surprise and chance to a conceptual basis. Playful art, far removed from the theoretical pretensions of Theodor Adorno or Clement Greenberg, allows us to enjoy amazement or fascination before the magic of matter. And it is in precisely this direction that the role of texture in Heinzmann's latest works points, conducting the texture of the support towards a code in the pictorial surface. At the same time, the use of the material as a support and the use of the material as paint transforms its nature. The manner of rubbing the aluminium, for example, or of pulverising and pouring the pigment, or of covering the canvases of his latest sand paintings with a denser material, alters the physical experience of the painting-object. Decoding these models and patterns through

models and patterns through material added to an existing support is an essential part of this practice. And in his latest works, this exploration, which has been part of Western art since the second half of the last century, intensifies significantly. Figures such as Agnes Martin or Ad Reinhardt explored not only the possibilities of monochrome, something evident in Heinzmann's works, but also something less visible but latent: the investigation of the possibilities of an universal grid.

One Another, as an exhibition, both sets a pace that advances through the rooms, through three of the pictorial models that have constituted Thilo Heinzmann's recent work, and brings together some of his most frequent materials. This creates a pictorial universe that oscillates between the total conception of the painting – or, in other words, the relationship between the painting and the pictorial object as a whole – and the succession of discontinuities and fractures that arise in each of them. The brushstrokes, layers, and lines overlap in such a way that there are no marks with which to reconstruct the process of the gestures; Rather, this process opens up to its opposites: from the atomic to the universal, from the explosive to the implosive.