

JOHN ZURIER
Knowledge is a blue naiveté

Galerie Nordenhake is pleased to present the first solo-exhibition by the US-American painter John Zurier in Germany. *Knowledge is a blue naiveté* is comprised of a new series of paintings created during—or in conjunction with—the artist's latest stay in Iceland.

Zurier's work, one could argue, has been driven by a seemingly simple challenge ever since he began to paint: how does one paint all but the pale empty blue sky between two buildings? The rendition of emptiness—the creation of a space where nothing has been painted—turns out to be the most difficult thing to achieve within the confines of painting. This concern with the myriad effects of light, colour and space, achieved with the most pared down and direct means, produces paintings of utmost sensuous presence and poetical substance. Almost monochromatic compositions, Zurier's paintings are indeed highly concentrated investigations into the process of painting and the materiality of paint and canvas, often inspired by simple everyday observations of the conditions of light and colour.

Within Zurier's process, every single layer of paint is applied as if it were the last. He develops his paintings through an open, organic activity where the quantity of layers, composition of pigments and the peculiarities of the supporting canvas become the main parameters. The choice of materials and their treatment play an important role within this process. Zurier researches his paints thoroughly; historic or rare pigments are often used to mix tempera and oil paints. Painstaking attention is paid to the different colours and texture of the weave of the canvas—every element will have an influence on how light is absorbed or reflected upon the picture plane. With concern to his materials, as with everything else, he follows the axiom that the painting should be kept as simple as possible.

The lyrical qualities of his work often lie within their tendencies to be reductive and calm, but also in their density and thus inherent depth. "John Zurier walks a tightrope that stretches between everything and nothing." (David Ebony)

The title of the exhibition quotes a passage of the poem *Aniara* written by the Swedish Nobel laureate Harry Martinson in 1956. One of the 103 cantos reads „We're coming to suspect now that our drift / is even deeper than we first believed, / that knowledge is a blue naiveté / which with the insight needful to the purpose / assumed the mystery to have a structure.“

John Zurier was born in 1956 in Santa Monica, California and lives and works in Berkeley, California. His work was exhibited at the 30th São Paulo Biennial in São Paulo, Brazil (2012); California Biennial at the Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA (2010-2011); UC Berkeley Art Museum (2009), CA; 7th Gwangju Biennial, South Korea (2008); Oakland Museum of California (2007); Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK (2003) and the Whitney Biennial (2002) amongst others. His work is part of numerous public collections such as the Berkeley Art Museum, University of California; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, ME.

In 2011 he published the book *Repeat after me* together with the poet Bill Berkson for which he made watercolours on Japanese notebook paper. He is Professor of Painting and Drawing as well as for Fine Arts at the California College of the Arts.

Exhibition period: September 21 – November 9, 2013
Opening hours: Tuesday - Saturday 11:00 – 18:00
Please contact the gallery for further information and press images.

Upcoming exhibition: Spencher Finch: November 16, 2013–January 11, 2014

ARTISTS: CHRISTIAN ANDERSSON OLLE BAERTLING MIROSLAW BALKA ANNA BARHAM IÑAKI BONILLAS ANN BÖTTCHER GERARD BYRNE JOHN COPLANS SARAH CROWNER JONAS DAHLBERG ANN EDHOLM SPENCER FINCH HREINN FRIDFINNSSON PAUL FÄGERSKIÖLD FELIX GMELIN FRANKA HÖRNSCHEMEYER GUNILLA KLINGBERG EVA LÖFDAHL MEUSER HELEN MIRRA ESKO MÄNNIKKÖ SIROUS NAMAZI WALTER NIEDERMAYR SCOTT OLSON MIKAEL OLSSON MARJETICA POTRČ HÅKAN REHNBERG ULRICH RÜCKRIEM MICHAEL SCHMIDT FLORIAN SLOTAWA LEON TARASEWICZ JOHAN THURFJELL ALAN UGLOW GÜNTER UMBERG NOT VITAL MAGNUS WALLIN STANLEY WHITNEY RÉMY ZAUGG JOHN ZURIER