

KATI HECK

Mann O Mann

4 September - 11 October 2014

The Tim Van Laere Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new works by Kati Heck (b. 1979, Düsseldorf). The Antwerp based artist is a strong and outlandish personality, whose paintings employ a secluded iconography, vocabulary and self-invented words and expressions such as 'Hauruck' and 'Servus Mobile'. "Mann O Mann" is the artist's second solo exhibition at the gallery and consists of a new series of portraits and two still lifes, which are self portraits and drawings.

Kati Heck is to be considered an heiress to German Expressionism. One is reminded of the bars, dancers and actors of Otto Dix and George Grosz, at the same time as the Old Masters. Heck synthesizes and fuses styles. She is as much an abstractionist as a realist. Parts of her paintings are meticulously rendered on her stitched canvases, with a unique virtuosity and acute attention to detail, while others look streaked, smeared and sculpted as in 'O Romain'. You can find reflections of Robert Rauschenberg, the way she combines non-traditional materials and everyday objects in innovative combinations.

She challenges the medium of paint on a completely new level, as a gesture toward unabashed self-assertion and its radical effects. As the artist states, "I always opt to use more paint, it helps me move away from realism and towards total freedom." Her portraits embody a deeply compelling vision, broadly social, yet inscrutably personal. The subjects displayed are more than mere actors performing roles, they are intimate figures of the artist's immediate surroundings ('O Tina'). As Jan Hoet noted of the artist's oeuvre in general: "She seems to physically enter all her subjects, always striving for perfection, even when she liberates herself from observation and starts to deconstruct, or gives painting a free hand. This tendency could be explained by her mastery of all this as a painter, convincingly assuring the harmony of the whole, even if the viewer first feels disrupted and disturbed. She never repeats herself, each work is a narrative image of empathizing with the subject and experimenting with paint in its material potentialities and possibilities."

Her work has been the subject of several solo exhibitions at prominent institutions internationally, most recently in 2013 at CAC Malaga. Other venues which have presented solo exhibitions include Mary Boone Gallery, New York; Museum Het Domein Sittard, Netherlands; group shows at M HKA, Antwerp, Belgium; Middle Gate, Geel; Saatchi Gallery, London; Bozar, Brussels; National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China.