

HAUSER & WIRTH

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Press Release

Rita Ackermann Chalkboard Paintings

Hauser & Wirth Zürich

24 January – 14 March 2015

Opening reception: Friday 23 January, 6 – 8 pm

Hauser & Wirth Zürich is pleased to announce an exhibition of new chalkboard paintings by Rita Ackermann. This body of work was presented for the first time at Sammlung Friedrichshof, Austria in 2014, and a second series was shown later the same year at Art Unlimited, Art Basel. The works in this exhibition are a step further in Ackermann's investigation into the deconstruction and disappearance of a pictorial language. Ackermann's new compositions occupy a space between the figurative and the abstract, where human forms simultaneously disappear and re-emerge in traces of chalk dust.

Process is intrinsic to these paintings. Ackermann primes the canvas with traditional chalkboard paint before drawing out a figurative scene in chalk. The drawings are then partially washed away in vigorous sweeping gestures that oscillate between the visible and invisible, revealing only limited emphasis on method, subject and production. The repetitive steps of layering and erasure cause the chalk lines to dissolve in a cyclical process through which new abstracted images and shapes emerge. These are then further overworked with spray paint, prior to a final fixative seal.



Ackermann's earliest works, created between 1993 and 1996, such as 'Get a Job' (1993) were the point of departure for the body of work in this exhibition. The figures in these early paintings are classically composed in idyllic scenes that convey serenity after a violent act. Here, the figures from Ackermann's early works are the foundation for the chalkboard drawings on the surface of the paintings. The more these chalk drawings are erased, the more visible they become, resulting in a state of flux.

Rather than abandon figuration for abstraction, Ackermann instead aims for the liminal divide that lies between the two. She presents contrasting palettes and pigments and a constant shifting between systematic and accidental lines; her controlled gestures create a script in reverse.

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About the Artist

Rita Ackermann was born in 1968 in Budapest, Hungary. She currently lives and works in New York NY. Ackermann's recent solo exhibitions include 'MEDITATION ON VIOLENCE-HAIR WASH' at Sammlung Friedrichshof, Burgenland, Austria and Sammlung Friedrichshof Stadtraum, Vienna, Austria (2014); 'Negative Muscle', Hauser & Wirth New York, 69th Street (2013); 'Fire by Days', Hauser & Wirth London, Piccadilly (2012); the Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami FL (2012); 'Bakos', Ludwig Museum, Budapest, Hungary (2011); and 'Rita Ackermann and Harmony Korine: ShadowFux', Swiss Institute, New York NY (2010).



Rita Ackermann organised the group exhibition 'FREEZER BURN', which took place at Hauser & Wirth New York, 69th Street in November 2014.

Ackermann's work has also featured in numerous group presentations 'Extreme Drawing: Ballpoint Pen Drawing Since 1950' The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield CT, (2013); 'Pivot Points: 15 Years and Counting', MOCA Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, Miami FL (2013); 'Looking at Music: 3.0', Museum of Modern Art, New York NY (2011); 'Inaugural Exhibition', New Jersey Museum of Contemporary Art, New York NY (2010); 'Street and Studio', Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria (2010) and 'Whitney Biennial', Whitney Museum of American Art, New York NY (2008).

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Only Choice
2014

Acrylic, chalk, spray paint on canvas
198.1 x 111.8 cm / 78 x 44 in

The Wall Coming Down
2014

Enamel, acrylic, spray paint, chalk on canvas
183.2 x 325.4 x 5.4 cm / 72 1/8 x 128 1/8 x
2 1/8 in

© Rita Ackermann
Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

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