

HAUSER & WIRTH

Press Release

Isa Genzken Geldbilder

Hauser & Wirth London, South Gallery

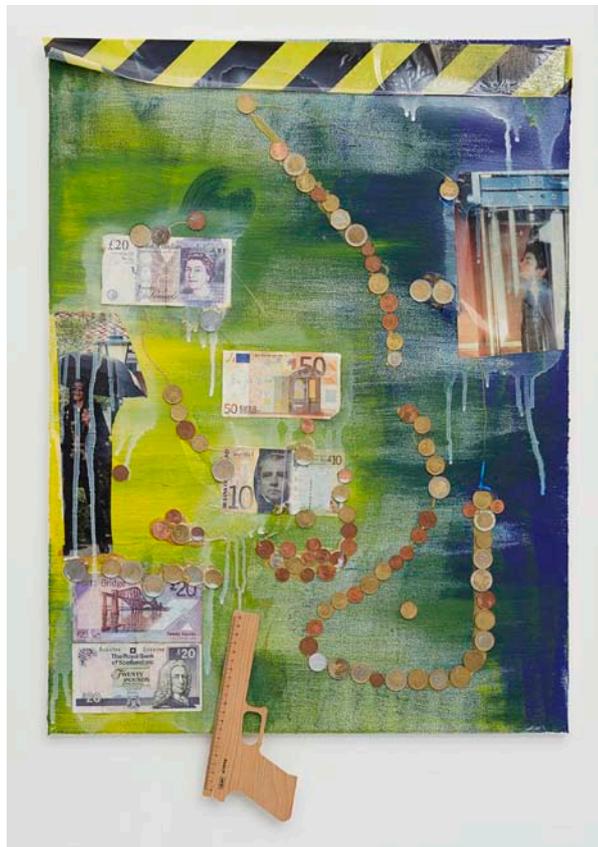
26 March – 16 May 2015

Opening: Wednesday 25 March 2015, 6 – 8 pm

In a new series of paintings unveiled at Hauser & Wirth London, Genzken employs motifs from the language of capitalism to explore themes of self- and social-examination. Since the 1970s, Genzken's diverse practice has encompassed sculpture, photography, found-object installation, drawing and painting. Her work borrows from the aesthetics of Minimalism, punk culture and assemblage art to confront the conditions of human experience in contemporary society and the uneasy social climate of capitalism. Although her approach varies greatly, Genzken has maintained a striking common thread and internal truth to both her vision and her works of art themselves.

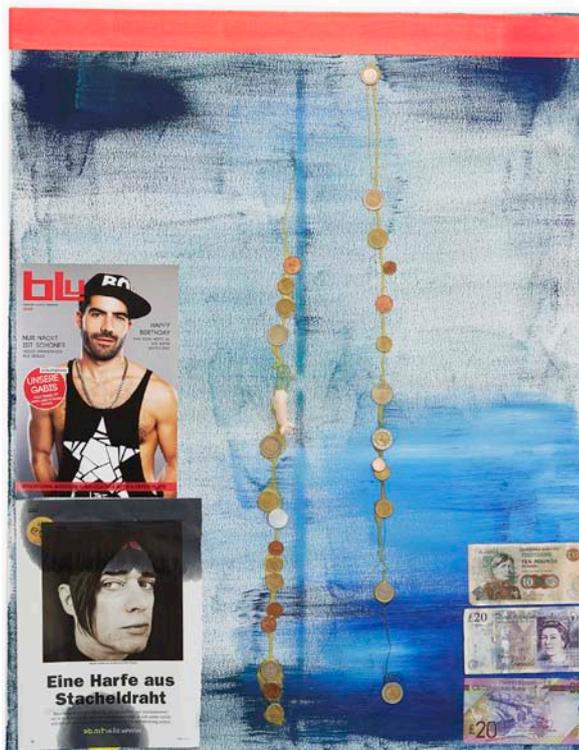
In the Geldbilder works, Genzken takes money as a painterly medium itself, affixing notes and coins of various currencies and denominations to the canvas. She uses the very tools of a profit-driven society in her most direct and literal engagement with its principles.

Genzken disassociates money from its role as currency, and encourages an appreciation of it as a material object, as a social artefact, and for its symbolic connotations. Genzken plays on the concept of art as investment, with the suggestion that these notes and coins might be removed and re-used in times of hardship. The paintings physically 'hold' capital, acting as stable assets even in the most volatile market. These poetic and chaotic paintings make explicit reference to the monetary value of art, and the systems that underpin society at large. Genzken has also incorporated money into her earlier, more abstract paintings of the 1990s, in which she laid coins onto a canvas and coated the surface with lacquer, before removing them to reveal only the imprint of the coins' shape left behind. Her three artist books entitled 'I Love New York, Crazy City' (2006) represent information overload, and the stimulation and urban pace of the city at a time in which she was working through her own unsettled emotions after a divorce. The books are comprised of layers of ephemeral papers such as newspaper clippings, receipts, photographs, cigarette packets, and include a number of \$500 bills.



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The new series possesses a raw, aggressive energy. Genzken has roughly covered each canvas in a combination of vivid, unmixed colours, using either a large-bristle brush or spray can, sometimes dripping the paint in thick, random gestures, with the impressions of the canvas' supports and areas of unmarked surface still visible. The coins and notes are applied in seemingly random patterns; stacked, grouped to create shapes or arranged in lines traversing the surface of the painting. Elsewhere she scrawls her name in large, graffiti-style letters in spray paint, as an outlandish version of the artist's signature and a reference to the autobiographical element that is ever-present throughout her practice. Exploring the dynamic of personal versus social anxiety, Genzken integrates photographs of herself amongst the material adorning the Geldbilder paintings, continuing her interest in representations of the body, and of herself in particular.



The Geldbilder paintings include found objects reappropriated for artistic use. An anthropologist of her own environment, Genzken incorporates aspects of her immediate surroundings into the artworks as a contextual reference point, including promotional leaflets for products and services in Berlin, where she lives and works. In the manner of Robert Rauschenberg's Combines, small plastic animals are glued to a painting's surface, or a feather, fabric pouch or wooden ruler in the shape of a toy gun are suspended from the bottom of the canvases. With the inclusion of these ubiquitous objects the works come to resemble tableaux of contemporary society. Genzken's ongoing interest in modernist architecture pervades her new body of work; as a reference point to the aesthetics of construction, Genzken applies striations of industrial tape to the surfaces of the paintings, and the shape of the canvases recall skyscrapers and building blocks.



The Geldbilder paintings are contextualised within the exhibition by earlier examples of Genzken's work, including a group of concrete sculptures from the early 1980s.

This exhibition coincides with a major presentation of new work by Genzken at MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main, Frankfurt, Germany. In June, the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, England will host an exhibition of Genzken's Basic Research paintings. Genzken will also present a compact survey as part of the 56th International Art Exhibition, Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy, curated by Okwui Enwezor.

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About the Artist

Isa Genzken has long been considered one of Germany's most important and influential contemporary artists. Born in Bad Oldesloe, Germany, Genzken studied at the renowned Kunstakademie Düsseldorf whose faculty at the time included Joseph Beuys, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh and Gerhard Richter. Genzken had her first major retrospective in 2009. 'Isa Genzken: Open Sesame!' opened at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, England (2009) and travelled to Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany (2009). Other important solo exhibitions include 'Hallelujah', Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin, Germany (2012); Museion Bozen, Bolzano, Italy (2010); 'Ground Zero', Hauser & Wirth London (2008); and Wiener Secession, Vienna, Austria (2006). In 2007, Genzken was chosen to represent her country in the 52nd Venice Biennale. Also in 2007, Genzken's works were featured for the third time in Skulptur Projekte Münster, Münster, Germany. Genzken's work has also been included in three Documenta exhibitions: documenta XI (2002); documenta IX (1992); and documenta VII (1982).

In 2013, a touring retrospective opened at MoMA Museum of Modern Art, New York NY and travelled to The Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas TX and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago IL in 2014.

Current & Forthcoming Exhibitions:

Subodh Gupta
'Seven Billion Light Years'
10 February – 25 April 2015
Hauser & Wirth New York, 18th Street

Fabio Mauri
'I was not new'
5 March – 2 May 2015
Hauser & Wirth New York, 69th Street

Zhang Enli
'Four Seasons'
8 March – 21 June 2015
Hauser & Wirth Somerset

Susan Philipsz
'As Many As Will'
21 March – 21 June 2015
Hauser & Wirth Somerset

Architecture Season
21 March – 21 June 2015
Hauser & Wirth Somerset

'LAND MARKS: Structures for
a Poetic Universe'
21 March – 21 June 2015
Hauser & Wirth Somerset

Diana Thater
'Life is a Time-Based Medium'
26 March – 16 May 2015
Hauser & Wirth London

Dieter Roth, Björn Roth, Oddur Roth
'Roth Bar & Studio'
28 March – 29 May 2015
Hauser & Wirth Zürich

André Thomkins
'Works 1946 – 1985'
28 March – 30 May 2015
Hauser & Wirth Zürich

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Isa Genzken
Geldbild I
2014
Bills, coins, printed paper, adhesive tape,
wood, acrylic on canvas
80 x 60 cm / 31 1/2 x 23 5/8 in

Isa Genzken
Geldbild II
2014
Bills, coins, plastic figure, printed paper,
adhesive tape, acrylic on canvas
90 x 70 cm / 35 3/8 x 27 1/2 in

Isa Genzken
Geldbild IV
2014
Bills, coins, flyer, acrylic on canvas
100 x 50 cm / 39 3/8 x 19 5/8 in

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Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth