

G A L E R I E G I S E L A C A P I T A I N

K E L L E Y W A L K E R

April 16 – May 23, 2015

Galerie Gisela Capitain is pleased to announce its first solo exhibition with the American artist Kelley Walker.

Kelley Walker's work deals with the idea of the production of images, as well as the economical and technical conditions of their distribution. Likewise, Walker's complex body of work is about the actual production, or new production, of images themselves.

The material sources for his discursive and dense body of work are 20th century pop culture, the media imagery of advertisement since the 1950s, and the pictorial language of contemporary computer software and networks. The key to Walker's work lies in the step between appropriation and distribution: "The relationship between the scanner, the computer and the printer, along with the ability of images to endlessly flow into one another and to be repeatedly pumped through this system, provided the original structural logic." (Kelley Walker, 2007) In describing Walker's work one is perhaps better off speaking of "expropriation" rather than "appropriation", for above all it is the formal appearance of the image itself and its original context that are "expropriated."

In the group show that he curated at Galerie Gisela Capitain in 2011, Kelley Walker exhibited a multi-paneled work reproducing an advertisement for the Pioneer corporation featuring Andy Warhol: in it Warhol poses with a Pioneer turntable. In his first solo exhibition at Gisela Capitain, Walker will again pick up on the turntable theme. The invitation card itself features the aforementioned Pioneer turntable. In the new groups of works that he has made especially for the show, Walker uses portions of a record collection that his friend Bob Nickas made available to him. The point of departure is an analog storage media, namely the vinyl record and its packaging. With these materials Walker creates three dimensional images – made with digital, as well as analog techniques – which constantly oscillate between digitalization and material realization, between two and three dimensionality.

Two groups of works evolve from this process: two multi-panel works in which the analog motifs are digitally reworked, perfected and printed on MDF; and a series of silk screens that exhibit analog craftsmanship. The working methods range from manual manipulation, to various technical methods of reproduction, and finally abstraction and perfectionism. In each new state the essence of the previous state remains, yet it is simultaneously negated.

The motifs that Walker has selected often connote revolutionary events in American history. The prominent use of vinyl records triggers associations with the New York disco scene of the 1970s (Loft Parties). At this point one should at least be reminded of the relationship between disco and its role in the budding gay community of 1970s New York, and therewith the discussions of sexuality, sex and race, and the queer studies discipline that resulted from it.

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Walker's combination, merging, and confrontation of digital and analog media and techniques push the dialectical criticism of the digital and analog spheres. His works complexly and intelligently question the possibilities of digital as well as analog production and reproduction, and can be endlessly transformed and linked with one another; though at the same time they subvert each other, so that each work is capable of critiquing another. (See Robert Hobbs, *Kelley Walker: Permeable Boundaries*, in: *Kelley Walker*, ex. cat. Paula Cooper Gallery, 2014)