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January 31, 2017



ALBERT OEHLLEN

ELEVATOR PAINTINGS: TREES

Opening reception:
Tuesday, February 28, 6–8PM
February 28–April 15, 2017

522 West 21st Street
New York, NY 10011

Qualities that I want to see brought together: delicacy and coarseness, color and vagueness, and, underlying them all, a base note of hysteria.

—Albert Oehlen

Gagosian is pleased to present “Elevator Paintings: Trees” by Albert Oehlen. Oehlen’s oeuvre is a testament to the innate freedom of the creative act. Unleashing this freedom through self-imposed constraints, Oehlen sets rules and boundaries in order to test the breaking point of painting itself. Through expressionist brushwork, Surrealist methodology, computer-generated lines, and self-conscious amateurism, he multiplies the potential of visual codes through processes of persistent accretion.

Of the two groups of works in “Elevator Paintings: Trees”—both being shown in New York for the first time—the *Tree Paintings* (*Baumbilder*) are permutations of an ongoing series that Oehlen began more than thirty years ago. For this iteration, he limited his palette to predominantly black and red. On bright white Dibond, black lines track the hand’s erratic ambulations, while red gradations are contained within geometric figures of a more digital register. The black, mobile lines take on a representative function, as if measuring their own relation to the red, still planes. Using a new technical approach, the *Elevator Paintings* are all-over polychromatic oil paintings in which Oehlen stages oppositions between clear contours and amorphous blurs. Over areas of clean, solid color, he applies

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voracious sprays, drips, and strokes in muddy greens and grays, deep reds and flesh tones, further complicating his conflation of erasure and enhancement.

A fully illustrated catalogue, *Elevator Paintings: Trees*, with an essay by Andreas van Dühren will accompany the exhibition.

Albert Oehlen was born in 1954 in Krefeld, Germany and currently lives and works in Switzerland. Collections include Museum of Modern Art, New York; Cleveland Museum of Art, OH; MOCA Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, FL; Broad Contemporary Art Museum, Santa Monica, CA; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, Spain; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Tate, London; Istanbul Modern; and Museo Jumex, Mexico City. Recent solo exhibitions include *Secession*, Vienna (2004); “I know whom you showed last summer,” Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, FL (2005); Museo di Capodimonte, Naples, Italy (2009); “Réalité abstraite,” Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France (2009); “Terpentin,” Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany (2012); mumok - Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna (2013); 55th Biennale di Venezia (2013); Museum Wiesenbaden, Germany (2014); “Home and Garden,” New Museum, New York (2015); “An Old Painting in Spirit,” Kunsthalle Zürich, Switzerland (2015); and “Albert Oehlen: Behind the Image,” Guggenheim Bilbao (2017).

“Albert Oehlen: Woods near Oehle,” the largest exhibition of Oehlen’s work in the United States to date, is currently on view at the Cleveland Museum of Art through March 12, 2017.

Image: *Untitled (Baum 84)*, 2016, oil on dibond, 98 7/16 × 98 7/16 inches (250 × 250 cm)
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