

## André Butzer

11 March – 27 April 2017

Opening: 11 March, 6 – 8pm



*Untitled, 2016, oil on canvas*

**Galerie Max Hetzler** is pleased to announce an exhibition of new works by **André Butzer** at our Paris space, 57 rue du Temple. This is his seventh solo exhibition with the gallery since 2003.

The show will feature four of his recent *N-Bilder* (N-Paintings) as well as new figure-paintings underscoring his exploration of the possibilities and limits of painting.

The four *N-Bilder* on display, medium and large-scaled black and white oil paintings, belong to a body of work initiated in 2010 and have been developed over the last seven years. They are part of Butzer's utopian vision called NASAHEIM (N) and they consist of a single upright white gap painted freehandedly within fields of black color. The works reveal Butzer's intensive search for the exact relation of pictorial elements that constitutes the foundation of his practice.

These works create their own chromaticity in accordance with different lighting: black does not only absorb light but also becomes a source of light itself, as does the white part, hovering above the painting like an interstice, creating a visual flash. André Butzer considers himself a colourist, explaining the use of black and white as being an exploration of the maximum potential of colour and the consequence of the acceptance or inclusion of all tints.

As Butzer states, "the N-Paintings equally are, without any reason, theme and motif, although the matrix that repeats itself was originally related to bodies of flesh: a living vertical body carrying a dead horizontal carcass. (...) 'N' is a holy, probably golden number or letter (..) that is a help for artists to create and find their own way through their paintings. 'N' is its own ruler and knows no earthly measurement and degree."

Although the works appear to feature a more or less "straight line" or "form", at first glance, André Butzer neither believes in nor is willing to recreate the "earthly" measurements which merely organize scientific geometric entities. Thus, notions of foreground and background are destroyed. All paintings are unique, despite their similarities.

According to him, "artistic or painterly geometry is completely different from geometry we use in daily life or architecture or design. Painterly geometry is not imperfect, it's superior to daily life geometry, painterly geometry is about Heaven, (...), N; something else other than "world" or the rules applied within the world we have to live and suffer in."

Since the late 1990s Butzer refers to his art and its fundamental expressive elements as *Science Fiction Expressionism*. Often brightly coloured imaginations of abstraction and cartoonish figuration have depicted figures inspired by Walt Disney and animation, by politics and art history.

The characters in his paintings can be seen as "inhabitants" of NASAHEIM – faraway and beyond reach – a non-place where colours are stored for eternity. His neologism Nasaheim is conceived of the combination of NASA and Anaheim, a town originally settled by German winegrowers and has been home to Disneyland in California since 1955. As Butzer grew up in Stuttgart, West Germany during the 1970s and 1980s, a period in which American troops were still stationed there, the reference to the amusement park with a dark and twisted side could at first be misread as a satire of the American Dream, the artist in truth proposes only hope and balance.

Simultaneously, on view in the gallery are three figure-paintings, each showing a female protagonist as open-eyed witness of the NASAHEIM enlightenment. Since he began working on the *N-Bilder* series in 2010, Butzer has been dreaming of bringing "back" his figures on a higher level, seeing them peacefully recurring as a new experience of color and light, recurring as the abstract pictorial totality that the *N-Bilder* have suggested to him.

**André Butzer** was born 1973 in Stuttgart and currently lives south of Berlin in Rangsdorf. He has been the subject of solo exhibitions at institutions such as Bayerisches Armeemuseum, Ingolstadt; Neue Galerie, Gladbeck (2016); Kunstverein Reutlingen (2015); Kunsthistorisches Museum/Theseustempel, Vienna; Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover (2011); and Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Nuremberg (2009). He has also participated in various important international group shows including Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (2015); Kunstmuseum Stuttgart (2014), Kunsthalle Emden (2013); MoCA – Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2013); Museum für Konkrete Kunst, Ingolstadt; Kunstraum Munich (2012); Kunstmuseum St. Gallen (2011); MUMOK Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna (2008). His works are in the public collections of Carré d'Art – Musée d'art contemporain, Nîmes; Kunstmuseum Stuttgart; Kupferstichkabinett/State Museums of Berlin; LACMA Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; MoCA Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix; Scharpff Collection, Stuttgart/Bonn; and the University of Chicago amongst others.

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**For further information, please contact:**

Eline Thirion-Berg  
presse@maxhetzler.com or +33 1 57 40 60 80

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