

Markus Oehlen

"Todo debe irse" (Picasso)

Exhibition duration: April 28 – June 2017

Gerhardsen Gerner is pleased to announce the sixth solo exhibition with the German artist Markus Oehlen for the GALLERY WEEKEND BERLIN 2017.

Markus Oehlen is one of the most influential German painters of the present day. Together with Martin Kippenberger, Albert Oehlen, A. R. Penck, Walter Dahn, Werner Büttner and, in Berlin, Rainer Fetting, he shaped the painting of the "Neue Wilde" movement in the 1980s. The starting point for the young artists was the intention to break with the barren, overly thought-out styles that dominated the 1970s and *"replace them with an abundance of imagery, narrative, materials, colors and free-flowing spaces".*¹⁾

The aim was, through art, to free themselves from the repressive constraints of the intellectualized art of the previous decade. In their often dark-toned pictures, they also took a stance against the prosperous apathy of the 1980s and bourgeois hierarchies and values.

Markus Oehlen differs from his painter colleges in that, even in the early 1980s, despite his use of spatially dominating elements, he always gives the line special compositional significance. In the 1990s he gradually began to make use of found elements, which are removed from their old context and take on a new function of their own. In his cord images, the line finally finds its way onto the canvas in a three-dimensional form and dominates the picture.

Oehlen is increasingly interested in the perception experiments of the Op Art; the cords are slowly developing into disruptive image elements, which, later printed, extend like a grid above and below the complex layering of the image. Together with forms that recall early digital aesthetics, they bring a serial moment into the paintings, which can also be understood as a humorous commentary on the expressive aspects of the "Neue Wilde" movement.

For the Gallery Weekend Berlin 2017 Markus Oehlen now presents a series of new works on canvas that take a decisive step further: the cord and the line meet in a maximally dense universe of lines. On his multiple grid-like printed backgrounds, a remnant of his early days as a pattern designer²⁾, Oehlen uses a further layer of photographic collage elements – of highly enlarged colored cords! In his new works, Oehlen revisits earlier pictorial themes, varies them and experiments with the possibilities of expanding painting through artistic printing methods and photography. Thus, in his new paintings, he also works on the flattening of hierarchies in the visual arts.

Markus Oehlen has had a number of solo exhibitions, including a show integrated into "Hängung #15" at the museum of the collectors Alison and Peter W. Klein in Eberdingen-Nussdorf (2016); the Kunsthalle Gießen (2010); The Centro Cultural Andratx (2009); The Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz (2002); The Kassel Kunstverein (1996); or, together with Georg Herold, at The Museum of Modern Art, New York (1993).

In 2015 his work was shown in the large retrospective exhibitions "The 80s. Figurative Painting in West Germany" at the Städel Museum in Frankfurt / Main; "Geniale Dilletanten. Subculture in Germany in the 1980s" at Haus der Kunst in Munich; "Aufbruch in Augsburg. German Painting from the 1960s to the 1980s" at the

Kunstareal in Munich and "Ballgasse 6. Galerie Pakesch and the Art of the 80s" in the Vienna Museum.

Public collections, among others, Essl Museum–Kunst der Gegenwart, Klosterneuburg; Kunstraum Grässlin, St. Georgen; Kunsthalle Weishaupt, Ulm; Kunstwerk, Alison & Peter Klein Collection, Eberdingen; Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden; Museum für Moderne Kunst (MMK), Frankfurt/Main; Museum Villa Haiss, Zell a.H.; Proje4L–Elgiz Museum of Contemporary Art, Istanbul; Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis; Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach; ZKM | Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe
Markus Oehlen (born 1956) lives and works in Munich. He is a professor at the Munich Academy of Fine Arts.

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- 1) Robert Rosenblum: *Gedanken zu den Quellen des Zeitgeistes*, in: *Zeitgeist. Internationale Kunstausstellung Berlin 1982*, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin 1981, p. 11
- 2) In the textile industry, pattern designers draw graphic drafts for fabrics.
