

GALERIA HEINRICH EHRHARDT

André Butzer

April 7th - May 29th 2018

German artist André Butzer's (Stuttgart, 1973) third solo exhibition at the Heinrich Ehrhardt Gallery focusses on his most recent painting. Distanced from subject matter, narrativity and the subjective, Butzer now delves deep into pictorial questions related to colour and light. Despite presenting a body of work dominated by paintings that are entirely black, though not monochrome, with their respective nuances, tonalities and subtle appearances of whitish hues, for Butzer black is part of the road he has embarked on towards the essential. Far from how they might be interpreted, these paintings do not constitute either a beginning or an end. They are vast painted surfaces in search of a spiritual balance which consciously flees from both idea and corporality. The painter himself has stated, with regard to earlier works, a prelude to the ones on display here, that "I did not need ideas, I wasn't looking at anything specific, but rather the painting emerged on its own", alluding to a certain faith or intuition that is present in his actions.

In the same way, and although obviously these new paintings rise out of the dissolution of the previous ones, the so-called N-Bilder (N-Paintings), a group or works which he began to work on around 2010, they should not be considered in terms of series but, rather, as a succession: in spite of the similarity of conception shared by each one of these paintings, and the colour black that extends across them all, the artist himself avoids the idea of series; for Butzer the only thing that exists is the next painting, the next work to be painted. There is nothing else; he only knows that he will paint a painting related to the previous one and, even were he to try to paint exactly the same thing as the previous painting, it would inevitably be a new painting. And this is the basis for his distancing himself from the concept of series.

The N-Bilder make a specific allusion to a measure invented by the painter himself. Not as a sort of rational calculation but as a representation of a fertile pictorial area. Throughout recent years, the vital conscience of André Butzer, his esotericism and spirituality, have given rise to a body of work which he himself calls "light pressure". And that is what his new paintings produce. A force which is incorporeal and yet holds a physical impact, static and mobile at the same time, and which, between proximity and distance, constitutes a road towards the absolute objective.

In reality, the works of Butzer gathered together here, three black canvasses of varying sizes whose subtle white lines, more visible in his previous works, but faded here until they almost disappear interstitially, and three canvasses with figurative motifs (female figures in clear allusion to recurrent past motifs), but executed in a new and radical way, are, at the same time, a continuation of the N-Bilder, images of the objective and of totality, with a profound, mysterious halo which envelopes the notion of painting in an ethereal spirituality.

By gradually eliminating the personal, the mundane, subject matters, references and the literal from his work, objectivism has taken hold, and the spiritual, in the words of the painter, condenses the entire vital essence of his new painting. The dualities of white and black, present in his previous periods (where these two colours appeared in his paintings in a more evident fashion than they do here), now become sterile in the interests of attaining an absolute balance which annihilates line and geometry. There are no longer any vertical or horizontal paintings, there are no different colours or different subjects, his painting is no longer conceived in that way, but instead it absorbs all of them with the intention of dissolving them all in a totality of Messianic light.

André Butzer (Stuttgart, 1973) lives and works in Rangsdorf, near Berlin. Since 2001 he has been a professor at the Institut für SDI-Traumforschung, Berlin. His work has been presented in several individual exhibitions at institutions, such as Väckö Konsthall (2017); Bayerisches Armeemuseum, Ingoldstadt and Neue Galerie, Gladbeck (both 2016); Kunstverein Reutlingen (2015); Künstlerhaus. Halle für Kunst und Medien, Graz (2014); kestnergesellschaft, Hanover and Kunsthistorisches Museum - CAC Contemporary Art Club in Theseustempel, Vienna (both 2011); Kunsthalle Nürnberg (2009) and Kunstverein Heilbronn (2004).

He has also participated in numerous and important group exhibitions, most recently at Kunsthalle Krems (2017); Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2016); Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (2015); Kunstmuseum Stuttgart (2014); Kunsthalle Emden and MoCA - Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Los Angeles (both 2013); Museum for Konkrete Kunst, Ingolstadt / Kunstraum München (2012); Kunstmuseum St. Gallen (2011); mumok Wien and ZKM - Museum for Kunst und Medientechnologie, Karlsruhe (both 2008); Carré d'art - Musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes (2005) and Kunsthalle Hamburg (2003).

In June 2018 he will present his solo exhibition at Museum of the Light, Yoshii Foundation in Hokuto, Japan.

His work is in international collections such as Sammlung Scharpff, Taschen, Sammlung Goetz, Rubell Collection, Sammlung Land and Tyrol.