

Urs Fischer
soft

8 June – 18 August 2018
62 Kingly Street, London W1
Tuesday – Saturday, 11am – 6pm

So now you see....

This is the first time I have seen the works, and our show opens next week. Which shows how much I trust you Urs.

Yes that is good. I will try not to embarrass you.

The colours are extraordinary and I am looking at the monitor. Do the images have any symbolism for you? Are you making images that are specifically personal or universal?

Ultimately it is the same. Everything universal is personal. When you work on the phone, it is very direct. It is in front of you, and with your finger you can make whatever you want, wherever you want: at home, outside of a professional setting, work clothes are unnecessary. You are very close when you do it, so it is all very personal. Most of the drawings just happen, the image just comes along when you draw it. It is a stream of consciousness. What is a better word for it?

It is instinctual I guess?

It is the same when you do any other form of painting or drawing. You start and see where it goes.

Not for all artists. Some start with a very specific plan.

Hey, whatever you need, you know! But even when you plan it out you reach some point of uncertainty and that is when it all happens. It is like when a cat takes a poop, and then covers it with litter, you know, but it still has to take that poop.

We almost have a full page already!

All right, a page of wisdom, but let's cover that up quick.

So you have this thing: it is a drawing, a painting, a silkscreen, a print: what is it? It is all of these things, and I don't want to reduce it to a medium or a definition. I believe it doesn't matter what part of your body you use to make art, it is all the same: your mind, your body, your foot. Working on the phone, you basically paint with light. I like it better myself, because it is much closer to playing an instrument: your direct touch transfers immediately into what it is, rather than needing to move material around. You don't have material restrictions, you can go back and remove stuff, you don't have to damage, change or ruin a painting, you can just go back, you have freedom. I made many, many of these drawings and I can choose to go back in, make copies, change things, because they are all just files on my phone, until they are not.

I have a great big studio but I like that I am not using it at all, I am just sitting on the couch with my phone. It is awesome. And I can zoom in, I can work in detail on tiny things. The radius of my hand can do the same move in a very big or very small scale. I am not restricted by the real scale of my arm. On a traditional painting you are aware of how a hand or arm moved across that surface, both the reality and limitations of that.

The i-phone is tool for distance and intimacy.

It was created to be an extension of the body. It is very intimate. You don't have to be embarrassed if you make a crap drawing. You don't give up. Here you can fail and it is fine. It is a very liberating medium because it gets quicker to start and is moveable, accessible anywhere.

It is when you want to bring it back into the real world, that is the difficult thing. How do you breathe life into them? When you work on the phone you aren't working with real colours, tubes of paint. Here you can shift around any colour in any direction. For me it is coming from photography, from drawing, from painting, from sculpture. It is a natural combination of all of those. Since the mid-nineties I have been making drawings on a computer but it was always difficult to extract them because of print quality.



With the frames for these works I have started with a hand-drawn outline, then that hand is kind of distilled and executed in a way that is more contemporary. It says all it needs to say while still having the gesture of the hand. It is distilled and calmed down. It is both.

Many other artists are playing with i-Pads and phones. You know when you go to exhibitions and see notebooks of artists? You are never allowed to leaf through them, they are always behind glass and opened at only one page, or you have to put on white gloves to go through them, like an amazing Polke notebook I saw in someone's house. But this is a terrible medium, a notebook that is closed. So I do think the phone is better, you can share it, it is a very fast, lean, communicator. The images are made and then they are sent.

Can you talk about the format? In the past few years your silkscreen paintings have all been on a much larger scale, unlike the handmade early drawings in artist's frames that were much smaller.

These works are a bit larger than the early drawings I used to work on, whose size was dictated by the thickness of lines I wanted to use. But here it is fluid: you use the same tool to paint and draw. And the bigger silkscreen works of previous years all somehow start with a real thing, a person, a photo, an image. These start from scratch so they don't need to be any size but I like that they retain a certain size that makes them big enough to relate to in a physical way, so that the viewer isn't leaning forward to see them, peering in.

The colours are extraordinary. Luminous.

Because I am painting with light, I had to find an awesome printer to retain that. I say what I want them to look like, to hold that light, and get as close as we can through the printing. Usually you are making a print that is the result of a digital instruction from a computer to a printer and you have to accept the limits of that format. You cannot get back in there and change it. That is also why they are printed on gesso, to help them retain that glow. And to my surprise they do glow, they look glowing.

Why are some arranged in groups?

Because I always like drawing in a succession of images. You can make juxtapositions.

You are adding meaning, like words in a conversation.

You give them context, you give them a friend, you give them an opposite and they can bounce off that. They are not alone as artworks.

Can you talk about the sculpture of the tree branch?

The sculpture in the middle works like a pivot point, an anchor. Someone said the drawings look like daydreams and there is some truth in that. So the sculpture is the opposite it, it is a competing reality, it is an anchor, a reality, and it is in the middle of the room. But it brings some of the world you see in the drawings into a physical space, ideally. I mean, I don't know, in my mind it does that, it is almost like the show is very stiff and rigid in the way it is organised, because you have enough movement in the images. I like that the sculpture is almost human size and the plinth is like an altar.

The emotional charge of the new sculpture is almost the exact opposite to your new Rhino sculpture. It is sweet, charming, whimsical, and the rhino is cooler, more technical, more bombastic.

Each thing has its own path, you go along the path that the work lays out for you and you get to wherever the work wants you to go. In the rhino, it stays in the place where all those real things are colliding. With the branch, it is just a branch from the tree opposite the studio, it just fell down, it is more immediate, it wasn't analysed, researched, developed. Nonetheless it is not that different. It is a main body with attachments.

Urs Fischer (b. Switzerland, 1973) lives in New York. Recent major exhibitions include *Bliss*, Urs Fischer x Katy Perry, 39 Spring Street, New York; *Big Clay #4 and Two Tuscan Men*, Piazza della Signoria, Florence, Italy; *Urs Fischer: The Public & the Private*, Legion of Honor, San Francisco (CA), USA (all 2017); *Small Axe*, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2016); *False Friends*, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva (2016); a survey exhibition at MOCA, Los Angeles (2013); *Madame Fisscher*, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, Italy, 2012; and *Skinny Sunrise*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, 2012. He has had solo shows throughout Europe and the USA, including *Oscar the Grouch*, The Brant Foundation, Greenwich (CT) (2010) and *Marguerite de Ponty*, New Museum, New York (2009). In 2004, *Not My House Not My Fire* took place at Espace 315, Centre Pompidou, Paris, and the retrospective *Kir Royal* was held at Kunsthaus Zürich, Switzerland. Urs Fischer's work has been included in numerous group exhibitions including the Venice Biennale in 2003, 2007, and 2011. For further information please contact the gallery at +44 (0)20 7493 8611 or press@sadiecoles.com