

Press release
June 2018

Smooth Transitions

Jean-Marie Appriou, Lucas Blalock, Valentin Carron, Latifa Echakhch, Matias Faldbakken, Sam Falls, Alex Hubbard, Shara Hughes, Wyatt Kahn, Justin Matherly, Adam Pendleton, Tobias Pils, Magali Reus, Torbjørn Rødland, Ugo Rondinone, Josh Smith, Oscar Tuazon, Sue Williams

June 9 to June 17, 2018

Opening on Friday, June 8, 2018, 6 – 8 pm

Löwenbräu Areal, Limmatstrasse 270, 8005 Zurich

Tuesday – Friday 10-6, Saturday – Sunday , 11-5 and by appointment

Zurich Art Weekend: Saturday, June 9, 10- 8, Sunday, June 10, 10-8

The sculptures of the French artist **Jean-Marie Appriou** (born 1986 in Brest, France) appear archaic, evoking mythology and forms of primitive art. Yet, he often uses the very contemporary material of aluminium and doesn't refer to commonly known archetypes, but instead forms new ones himself. Appriou creates his works' handling material such as aluminium or clay in a way drawn from his own experience, resembling a modern-day alchemist's work. In doing so, he establishes his own mythology, alluding to existing forms while juxtaposing them with his own material approach.

Lucas Blalock (born 1978, Asheville, NC, USA) makes darkly comic photographs that probe discomfiting corners of the psyche, while thumbing his nose at staid photographic norms. His pictures are purposely awkward, ham-fisted, and jury-rigged, constructed with cutting-edge imaging software that normally fades into the background of slick post-processed advertising, but which he thrusts center stage. Anyone with a rudimentary working knowledge of Photoshop can understand the methods Blalock employs a jittery fuzz of clone stamping here, an irregular bit of masking there. He has no tricks up his sleeves. But this feeling that we can see the gears of the image turning is precisely Blalock's goal.

Working in sculpture, installation or on paper, **Martin Boyce** (born 1967 in Glasgow, Scotland, GB) creates landscapes that reflect the experience of urban space as well as our connection to objects surrounding us. He is known for investigating modern design and cubist forms, studying how the zeitgeist of these objects could be brought to the present. Boyce has developed grids and patterns resembling cubist art as well as the outlines of American and European cities. In these patterns, characters keep appearing and disappearing. Thus, Boyce's objects deconstruct historical narratives, allowing the viewer to enter into a discourse with his work.

In his sculptures and collages, **Valentin Carron** (born 1977 in Martigny, Switzerland) imitates traditional handicrafts, lesser known art-works (some of which were meant for the public space), stereotypical forms of modern art, and certain forms of the everyday. By appropriating these objects, he questions originality, authenticity, and identity in the globalized world. His reformulations of traditional handicraft, mainly from his Swiss home, show a characteristic touch of irony: Carron recreates these incarnations of a romantic, pastoral Switzerland with inexpensive industrial materials like polystyrene. In his recent works, he uses the same sense of irony to refer to the contemporary environment of technology and internet.

Transformation and memory are the key themes that form **Latifa Echakhch's** (born 1974 in Morocco, currently living in Switzerland) oeuvre. While her sculptures are elegant and delicate, the recipient must nevertheless not be deceived by this sensibility when the artist examines subjects such as culture, geography, and personal and collective histories. She explores these systems through mundane objects, images, and ordinary situations, repositioning them in a social and political debate. What emerges is a fundamental belief in the dignity of the subjects. Objects that begin rather banal then become messengers of emotions such as melancholy and anger, and offer a silent point of view on the failure of utopias.

In his works the Norwegian artist **Matias Faldbakken** (born 1973 in Hobro, Denmark) has been using industrial material or heavy duty objects, which he partly smashes, smudges or simply paints, while others are fixed with ratchet straps onto walls or stairs in the exhibition space. Thus, he deforms and partly crushes the objects. In doing so, he is interested in the potential tipping-over moment in which the raw industrial materials are recognized as art. In recent works he created *overlaps*, series of overlapping repeated pictures, which are glued on found objects that correspond to Faldbakken's existing imagery. Through the pictures, the objects become vessels for the pictures.

Concerned with the intimacy of time and place, **Sam Falls'** (born 1984 in San Diego, CA, USA) artwork pushes the expanded field of photography by employing its core precepts, namely time and exposure, intertwined with nature and the elements. Working largely outdoors with vernacular substrates and nature as his site-specific subject, Falls abandons mechanical reproduction in favor of a more symbiotic relationship with the subject and object. In doing so the works occupy a unique space between the fidelity of a subject in photography and the intimate interpretation in painting. His works often allude to the formal lexicon of minimalism and abstraction as the indexical forms are abstracted partly in process, bridging the borders between photography, sculpture, and painting.

Alex Hubbard (born 1975 in Toledo, OR, USA) is a painter and video-artist. He weaves together both fields by using the same approach in each medium and thereby rethinks video, painting, and their connections. In his paintings, Hubbard uses the volatile, fast-drying materials of urethane, resin, and fiber-glass. Once applied to the surface, these materials cannot be changed. Therefore his paintings – like the videos – always have the potential to unmoor themselves from their original plan. This gives the paintings a lot of space for accidents and unpredictabilities to take place during the process. This genesis, which leaves its traces in both the videos and paintings, creates the sometimes absurd, sometimes funny and sometimes dramatic attraction of Hubbard's works. They assemble a lasting collection of almost-failure moments.

Shara Hughes (born 1981 in Atlanta, Georgia, USA) states about her paintings that they are created only from the inside and in the very moment of painting. Referring to them as psychological landscapes or invented landscapes, her frenetic colors and vibrant brushstroke, ranging from monochromatic fields to harsh strokes and dots, show how the artist's practice is structured by art history as well as by contemporary peers. Fin de siècle styles such as Fauvism, Art Nouveau and German Expressionism can be found in her work alongside traces of contemporary painters such as Carroll Dunham, David Hockney (a series of her paintings and drawings function as analog versions of his iPad drawings) or Sanya Kantarovsky. Thus, the artist lays bare a paradoxical subjectivity consisting of layers that create a vibrant utopian now.

In his work, **Wyatt Kahn** (born 1983 in New York, NY, USA) is occupied with how space and image, painting and sculpture, object and photography interact. For his paintings, he stretches unpainted linen cloth or wraps lead over geometric yet irregularly cut MDF panels. The lead still wears traces of the production process – raw lines and scratches of the milling machines. In his photographs, Kahn employs a personal imagery of light bulbs, glasses, paint tubes or clocks, which are overlain by abstract patterns not dissimilar to those appearing in his paintings. He often comes back to former works, revising patterns from memory. In doing so, Kahn creates an oeuvre in which abstraction and representation merge and dissolve.

In his sculptures, **Justin Matherly** (born 1972 in West Islip, New York, USA) reinterprets both common and uncommon ancient forms. They are cast in concrete, which is poured into molds made of PVC tree-watering bags and other flexible material and then just roughly formed, in order to keep the traces of their production process. Matherly often presents his sculptures on pedestals constructed in part from medical supporting devices. His sculptures often allude to Nietzsche's reading of the ancient, thus linking antiquity with modernity and bringing both to the present.

Adam Pendleton (born 1984 in Richmond, Virginia, USA) uses images and language which he collects from books as material, creating a multidisciplinary oeuvre of collaged wall work, painting, and silk screen, as well as video and performance pieces. Pendleton, using the palette of black and white, has been working with black spray paint, a technique which for him holds something democratizing. In his immersive wall works, including single works of his ongoing series „Black Dada“ and „System of Display“, Pendleton has been using fragmented language culled from particular contexts such as poems or political speeches, addressing history, politics and race. Embedding language in abstract shapes, his works transport meaning that is not legible anymore. Pendleton's work hovers between abstraction and representation, drawing it's tension from this ambivalence.

Tobias Pils' (born 1971 in Linz, Austria) paintings often allude to topics such as birth and sexuality and are yet often situated in the painter's everyday life in Vienna. While projecting imagery originated from a dream logic, Pils creates compositions that oscillate between personal and general. His paintings are not only inhabited by figures but also by abstract forms – sometimes highly energetic, sometimes quietly present in the background, they serve formal questions while at the same time appearing as something left unspoken.

Often made in series, **Magali Reus's** (born 1981 in Den Haag, Netherlands) meticulously produced sculptural forms exhibit a shortcut of logic. Their formwork is engineered, their skins taut with the cold precision of industrial mass production, and whilst they are an abstraction of daily or familiar functional objects and machines their function throughout has been displaced. Reus is interested in material as evidence of process. Her structures are articulated through the use of complex casting, moulding and weaving techniques, framing the aggressive emptiness of manufacture against the slow diligence of handwork.

Over the last two decades, **Torbjørn Rødland** (born 1970 in Stavanger, Norway) has created a body of images in which precision and critical rigor co-exist with an erotic, improvisational intensity that evades the reach of language. If the majority of contemporary image-making relies upon the mediated, distancing effects of digital technologies, Rødland's ongoing use of analogue formats allows him to retain a measure of technical vulnerability, and to maintain a close connection to photography as a physical set of relationships between subject, light, film, and developing chemicals. Rødland's images cannot be read according to a single interpretive framework. They are dependent upon a willingness to wrestle with the diversity of life as a constantly evolving system of physical phenomena, emotional reaction, and cultural exchange.

Ugo Rondinone (born 1964 in Brunnen, Switzerland, lives in New York, NY, USA) has been working in a broad array of media since the 1980s, studying how common, sometimes banal forms of the everyday influence our way of perceiving our environment. In his paintings, text installations, sculptures, videos, poems, and public installations he has been employing forms such as human stone figures, clowns, or – as a signature of his work – the rainbow. These forms are accessible for everyone, yet they carry out an impression of uncertainty whether they truly are what they seem. Since the mid-nineties, Rondinone has been working with circular concentric forms, creating rainbow paintings and round paintings alluding to Jasper Johns' *Targets* and to Pop-art. These paintings create a hypnotizing absorbing effect, leaving the viewer in total immersion and thus re-creating an effect of the sixties' psychedelia. In Rondinone's work things represent what they are – a rainbow is a rainbow, a window is a window – but at the same time they are always more.

Josh Smith (born 1976 in Okinawa, Japan) first gained attention in the early 2000s with a relatively straightforward series of paintings of his name. Later, he began to unwind the name to create a series of sharp, colorful, and inscrutable abstract paintings. In recent years, the abstract paintings have morphed into more pictorial paintings built around simple subjects such as leaves, fish, skeletons, ghosts, and palm trees. Those subjects were chosen, partially, because they can be rendered easily by most anyone who cares to try. Therefore, the rendering of an image does not over-involve itself with any attempt towards pictorial virtuosity. For Smith paintings are largely hosts for expression and experiment.

The sculptor **Oscar Tuazon** (born 1975 in Seattle, WN, USA) works with natural and industrial materials to create inventive and often functional objects, structures, and installations that can be used, occupied, or otherwise engaged by viewers. With a strong interest in and influence from architecture and minimalism, Tuazon turns both disciplines on their heads as he mangles, twists, combines, and connects steel, glass, and concrete as well as two-by-fours, tree trunks, and found objects. Tuazon produces objects and environments that draw out humanity's relationship to buildings, interior and exterior spaces, and other objects and structures.

Since **Sue Williams'** (born 1954 in Chicago Heights, IL, USA) pictorial and sculptural work came into public in the 90s, it has underwent great changes. At the beginning of her career, Williams painted figures that were heavily influenced by comic-books and the pictorial language of advertisement. These paintings often show domestic violent and explicit sexual contents, which were mostly understood as a feminist critique of the patriarchic society and of war. Over the years, Williams sometimes rawly applied figurative scenes changed into more casual and extended compositions that took over large-scale canvases – until they grew into almost or total abstractions, into intertwined swirling compositions consisting of body parts, orifices, and betokened organs.