

GALERIA HEINRICH EHRHARDT

Thilo Heinzmann
Bird of Prey Says No Grey
31st October - 11th December 2018

Bird of Prey Says No Grey is the title of Thilo Heinzmann's sixth solo exhibition at Heinrich Ehrhardt Gallery. The title's play on words, which metaphorically alludes to birds of prey, raises some concepts related to the artist's pictorial imagination, such as colour, speed, air and flight.

Hung on walls painted a singular shade of red, the five canvases, which constitute a new cycle of an ongoing series of works, flood the gallery with energy and movement. Like the fluttering of a bird's wings or their sonic and chromatic trail through the air, Heinzmann explores the juxtaposition of the relative nature of beauty and his conception of the universe.

Through the artist's choices of material and colour –in this case powder-based pigments on canvas– in conjunction with composition and gesture, Heinzmann activates the coordinates of space and time in order that these become transformational keys of art. This series constitutes a theoretical-emotional reflection not so much responding to an a posteriori recognition of the work, than as part of an analytical process that is innate to the production of Heinzmann's painting. Matter is the fundamental tool both to initiating this change and to offering a quality to space and time which makes them visible and latent in the works. A certain sense of space and time emerge in a constant duality: in these works space is concentration and expansion, while time is both eternal and transient, dynamic and static. The analytic-synthetic process of Heinzmann's work, its displacement and speed, allows us to discover a primitive and collective language of colour and matter in motion, which echoes in these works with astounding resonance.

The use of colour is another key issue in Heinzmann's work. Not only in each of the works individually but in the conception of the exhibition as a whole, colour behaves as a pure form. Colour covers space and gives it new form as a consequence. On this occasion, the artist has used red for the background of all the works, which – far from mere decoration – acts as an integral and cohesive element in the embodiment of the new colour of the wall and the different colours distributed throughout the works. Among several approximations to chromatic imaginary by art historians are those relating to colour theory and reactions to sensory stimuli produced in the late 19th century in France (such as those of Frédéric Portal, Chevreul and Dr. Feré), whose apogee was reached in Impressionism and in the famous "violettomania". Thus Manet himself even said: "Within three years, everyone will be painting violet!" And if, for the French artist, this was "the true colour of the atmosphere", it is curious that Thilo Heinzmann's final work also echoes the shifting of dominant colour in late 19th-century impressionist painting, with the overflowing patches and mixed shades of blue in the German's work seeming to give way to new divided and separated colours more closely related to Fauvism. And that is precisely what occurred at the turn of the century: the violet associated with melancholy, sadness and even mourning had caused such an obsession that red seemed to catch the eye of the new painters overnight. And it is precisely the colour red which Heinzmann uses to cover the gallery. "You have Fauvism when you have red", Matisse is believed to have suggested to Georges Duthuit. And so, by means of such optical effects, Heinzmann's captivating, focussed eye and explosive, dynamic gestures force us to contemplate form, colour, space and time as the true forces of painting in our time and the material splendour of the world.