

**Albert Oehlen**

***Sexe, Religion, Politique***

57 rue du Temple, 75004 Paris

13 October – 21 December 2018

Opening: 13 October 2018, 6 – 8pm

Galerie Max Hetzler is delighted to announce an exhibition of new paintings by Albert Oehlen at the Paris gallery.

Since the 1980s Oehlen has been probing the possibilities of painting through an ever-evolving style and technique. At the core of his practice are the limitations he imposes on himself as a point of departure, in order to have 'something to push against' and thereby expand and redefine our understanding of painting. In this new body of work, Oehlen demonstrates the consistency of his approach in setting narrow parameters to create stark and powerful imagery that highlight his will for constant renewal.

*"Freedom for me means playing. It does not mean to be in a void and make crazy moves. It means to play with your own rules."*

In the new paintings eccentric shapes and forms float untethered on the open surface. The self-appropriation of the tree motif and an allusion to the *Fingermalerei* (*Finger Paintings*) paintings is consistent with Oehlen's continual quest to reveal the process of painting and what occurs on the pictorial surface during that process. The tree motif first appeared in *Sturmschaden* in 1981 and again in the late 80s. It was at the same time that Oehlen was exploring the formal possibilities of the tree that he made his first purely abstract paintings in 1988.

Presented as a question of the line, the tree has become for Oehlen another rule – it has form and lines that taper off. Like Mondrian before him, Oehlen uses the line of the tree as an experiment to navigate between abstract and figurative forms, surface and depth: *"I see the tree as a program for my work, not just as a motif."*

The fields of bright yellow which serve as the background for the paintings is suggestive of sunshine and nature, yet the format of these works is not typical of a landscape or a vertical tree. Presented as a square, it engages with the geometric possibilities explored on the surface. Painted onto Alubond, an aluminium panel that offers an extremely smooth ground, the reduced black lines and forms dissect the picture plane, often extending beyond the support to open up the space in-between.

Combining impersonal gestures with bold geometric lines, Oehlen investigates the positive / negative opposition between the flat support and the texture of the paint as it dissolves and drips down the surface. Balancing the immediacy of free gesture with restricted mark-making along a template, the paintings oscillate between geometric rigidity and organic forms.

Exhibited in conjunction with *Albert Oehlen: Sexe, Religion, Politique* at Gagosian Paris, the reduction of colour, depth and surface in this new body of work highlights Oehlen's recourse to recurrent themes to give himself a framework beyond which to explore. Like *Bam Bam* and *Natty Dread Something* - evocative titles given to works - the paintings remain open-ended, calling us to take time, stop and look.

**Albert Oehlen** (\*1954, Krefeld) lives and works in Switzerland. Since 1981, he has been exhibiting regularly at Galerie Max Hetzler. Oehlen's work has been shown in numerous solo exhibitions in international institutions, such as Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana (2017); Cleveland Museum of Art and Guggenheim, Bilbao (both 2016); New Museum, New York and Kunsthalle Zürich, Zürich (both 2015); Museum Wiesbaden (2014); mumok, Vienna (2013); Kunstmuseum Bonn (2012); Carré d'Art de Nîmes (2011); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2009); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2006); MOCA, Miami; Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Nürnberg (both 2005); Musée Cantonal des Beaux Arts, Lausanne; Domus Artium 2002, Salamanca and Secession, Vienna (all 2004), among others.



Albert Oehlen, *Bam Bam*, lacquer and oil on alubond, 260 x 260 cm, 2 parts, 260 x 130 each, 2018

Works by Albert Oehlen are held in the permanent public collections of prominent international museums including Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg; Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; The Broad, Los Angeles and Tate Gallery, London.

*Cows by the Water: Albert Oehlen*, a major survey of the artist's work is currently on view until January 2019 at Palazzo Grassi in Venice. A solo exhibition is forthcoming at the Aishti Foundation, Beirut from 21 October 2018.

An exhibition catalogue will be produced on the occasion of the exhibitions *Albert Oehlen: sexe, religion, politique* at Galerie Max Hetzler and Gagosian.

Further exhibitions and fair participations:

18 – 21 October 2018

**FIAC**

9 November – 22 December 2018

Opening: 9 November, 6-8pm

**True Stories. A Show Related to an Era – The Eighties : Part II**

commissariat Peter Pakesch

Goethestraße 2/3, 10623 Berlin

9 November – 22 December 2018

Opening: 9 November, 6-8pm

**Charles Gaines**

Bleibtreustraße 45, 10623 Berlin

13 November 2018 – 8 February 2019

Opening: 13 November, 6-8pm

**André Butzer : 1 Eis, bitte! (1999)**

41, Dover Street, W1S 4NS London

Press enquiries:

Agence FAVORI  
Grégoire Marot, Nadia Banian  
nadia@favoriparis.com  
+33 1 42 71 20 46

Galerie Max Hetzler  
Eline Thirion-Berg  
Eline.thirion-berg@maxhetzler.com  
+ 33 1 57 40 60 80

[www.facebook.com/galeriemaxhetzler](http://www.facebook.com/galeriemaxhetzler)  
[www.instagram.com/galeriemaxhetzler](http://www.instagram.com/galeriemaxhetzler)  
[www.twitter.com/hetzlergallery](http://www.twitter.com/hetzlergallery)