

HERMANN NITSCH JULIAN SCHNABEL

06.04.2019 until 10.08.2019 **VIENNA**

HERMANN NITSCH

29.03.2019 until 01.06.2019 **INNSBRUCK**

Galerie Elisabeth & Klaus Thoman is pleased to announce the solo exhibition by **Hermann Nitsch** in Innsbruck as well as the double presentation by **Hermann Nitsch** and **Julian Schnabel** in Vienna.

The focus of the Innsbruck exhibition is on painting. In coordination with the big Hermann Nitsch exhibition at the Vienna Albertina, which opens on May 16, 2019, and dedicates no less than twenty rooms to the artist's paintings, Galerie Elisabeth & Klaus Thoman Innsbruck presents multi-coloured works, e.g. from the 70th action performance, which took place at our Vienna gallery in 2014. As a smaller revision of the museum exhibition, the Innsbruck show concentrates on painting in acrylics, while the Albertina also includes earlier works in oil. At a closer view, a thin grounding in a reddish brown hue can be made out beneath the paint in some of the works in both mediums. This colour film is reminiscent of the traces that the blood leaves on the canvas which is another integral part of the artist's technical repertoire, and especially in the *Orgien Mysterien Theater* is generously deployed. Moreover, in the production of his paintings, the artist resorts to ritual acts. It is not by chance that the pastose application, the pouring and splashing of paint evokes associations with a sacrificial ceremony. The ritual is of greater importance than the result, as it were. Nitsch's painting is firmly rooted in actionism, performance, in multi-mediality.

The Vienna exhibition, on the other hand, makes his work enter into a conceptual dialogue with the art of Julian Schnabel, a long-term artist friend, who he is in close communication with. At the same time, it places an emphasis on the technical aspect of Hermann Nitsch's actionist art. In contrast to the very intense, organic, partly chaotic and seemingly arbitrary execution, the artist's actions have never been improvised. Instead, every detail is minutely planned out in advance and laid out in scores. While the Albertina, that is, presents the products of the painting actions, Galerie Elisabeth & Klaus Thoman Vienna provides the documentary part of his actions as *Gesamtkunstwerke*. Besides early drawings, prints and colour scales, the presentation includes photographic documents of early actions, which make palpable their intensive atmosphere, as well as relics of performed works, and also scores. One of the highlights, no doubt, is the score to the 155th action performance on the occasion of the artist's eightieth birthday in Mistelbach. For the first time, the musical performance here takes centre stage. With the help of an orchestra of countless string, wind and percussion instruments, as well as a huge choir, Hermann Nitsch weaves a sound carpet, whose swelling and subsiding creates a very dense atmosphere. Another special feature of the 155th action performance is the exclusive use of harvested fruit, instead of animal carcasses and organs, which turned the sacrificial ritual into an ecstatic harvest festival, and made the artist arrive in the 21st century for good. Our exhibition documents the action performance by way of its score, as well as photographs and videos, and also includes a relic thereof.

What especially pleases us is the participation in the exhibition of Julian Schnabel, who gladly accepted Hermann Nitsch's invitation. Besides his neo-expressionist paintings, Schnabel's international fame is mainly due to his much decorated films, e.g. *Basquiat* and, most recently, *At Eternity's Gate*, a Vincent Van Gogh biography. As is the case with Hermann Nitsch, Julian Schnabel's art also includes music. In 1995, he published his first album, entitled *Every Silver Lining Has A Cloud*. The works shown in the exhibition, i.e. painting in acrylics and oil on maps, in composition and colour scheme in a sense echo Nitsch's action painting. Despite, or indeed because of their very different backgrounds, the works of both artists thus form a congenial combination.