

KATZ CONTEMPORARY

STÉPHANE ZAECH

beau monde

3 June - 30 July 2016

Opening: 2 June 2016, 6 - 8 pm

KATZ CONTEMPORARY is delighted to present new works by **Stéphane Zaech** (*1966 Vevey, lives and works in Montreux and Villeneuve, Switzerland) in an exhibition, which is curated by the artist himself. As the title *beau monde* (French for “Hautevolee”/High Society”) suggests, Zaech’s work will be displayed “in good company“ alongside well-known modern artists such as Picasso, Giacometti, Hodler, Vallotton, de Chirico and others. In the context of the show *Stéphane Zaech - beau monde* will be published, including a narrative by the artist in form of a dialogue.

Stéphane Zaech succeeds again and again in surprising even the most experienced viewers, confusing them and making them question their common way of seeing. This mostly only happens at second glance, however, since Zaech’s manner of painting is too virtuosic, his composition too skilled and too smooth. This is surprising since the dissonances really are quite striking: women’s bodies are stretched into multiple perspectives or they seemingly melt under the gaze of the viewer. Faces are deconstructed and one can frequently find a third eye in them. One is tempted to touch the painting in order to straighten it though that would not lead to a satisfying result since multiple perspectives are often combined within one single piece. Zaech has perfected his ability to compose his whimsical pictorial worlds from single, not-quite-fitting puzzle pieces into humorous and opulent baroque images in the manner of a collage.

Besides the figurative works Zaech also frequently paints landscapes in oil, some of which seem familiar while others have an exotic-foreign touch. The spectrum is wide and Zaech’s universe includes Arcadian as well as seemingly impenetrable forests, Mediterranean landscapes but also barren mountain- or winter sceneries, which allude to Japonism. Still, the artist says: „Je n’ai pas la curiosité exotique“. He claims not to travel like many of his globally oriented artist colleagues – the journeys mostly take place in his imagination, but also in museums, in which he gladly and frequently visits and studies the old and new masters.

Within his paintings Zaech successfully transfers and adapts the traditional image composition of art history’s masters into the present. The paintings in the exhibition thus take the viewer on a time travel through different eras of art history and the artist’s rich imagery. *Le vernis*, for instance, may remind one of Tintoretto’s *Susanna e i vecchioni* (ca. 1555/56), Giorgione’s *La Tempesta* (ca. 1506-08) or was it Cézanne’s *Trois baigneuses* (1875)? In fact, all of these are correct, yet false at once. The artist claims that he is not trying to animate the audience to discover any specific inspirations in his works since that would mean that he purposely disguised them, which is not his intention. What you may detect in Zaech’s work, however, are references or, phrased slightly differently, the memory of something you have seen before, which escapes the second that brush and paint touch the canvas. Then, the artist is entirely focused on the process of painting and the composition; everything else retreats to the background.

An attentive viewer will spot the Tizian catalog in the blonde woman's arms in *Stalker* and thus assume that Zaech pays homage to his famous colleague. Far from it, however, since the piece does not have anything to do with the great painter other than that Zaech does indeed admire him. The intention was simply to paint a book with a soft cover because of its characteristic shape. Had it not been this Tizian catalog which happened to be within reach, the woman might as well have held an issue of the Yellow Pages in her arms. Stéphane Zaech thus offers us an entirely novel viewing experience, which is triggered only in contemplation of the painting itself.

Stefanie Bissig

For visual material and further information please contact the gallery:
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PREVIEW

Zurich Contemporary Art Weekend

Saturday & Sunday, 11 & 12 June 2016, 11 am - 5 pm

Guided tours on each day at 3 pm, followed by an „Aperitivo con Bellini“

Publication in context of the exhibition

Stéphane Zaech

beau monde

Softcover, color, 48 pages

Available at KATZ CONTEMPORARY

CONSTRUCTED EPIPHANY

Dionisio González, Sebastian Stadler, Jason Klimatsas

26 August - 15 October 2016

Season opening: 25 August 2016