

Pressrelease

May 2014

Michael Williams

New Paintings

May 24 to July 19, 2014

Opening on Friday, May 23, 6 to 8 pm, Löwenbräu Areal, Limmatstrasse 270, 8005 Zürich

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is happy to present the first show of New York-based painter Michael Williams at the gallery's exhibition space at the Löwenbräu site.

These are peculiar worlds which painter Michael Williams has created in his new works. It is not only their complexity but to a certain amount also their innate state of incompleteness that may provoke a double take in anyone looking at them. Where does painting start (and indeed stop) in these pictures? And in which way do the subjects depicted in them relate to one another, or do they rather remain isolated?

Michael Williams manifests his preoccupation with painting as an artist's medium within the context of a fundamental, classic relation to material. "I've developed a real love for the stuff: the mediums, the physical lushness of the paint, the texture and glare."

Yet in contrast to this claim, all of a sudden we find him developing his new works on a computer where he produces figurative elements that become the basis for an entirely self-referential discourse. These elements and figures, either painted or drawn digitally, populate the space on the paintings in varying arrangements and degrees of intensity. As if they were the witnesses of his creative fervor, they comment on each other and appear somewhat surprised about their own existence. This is the case when a small ghost peeps out shyly from the center of an otherwise tidy and evenly patterned image, while in another painting the protagonist is waiting for his verdict: "Don't save, Cancel, Save."

The artist has radicalized his formal approach and technique in conflict with his commitment to the traditional painting process. After being generated on a graphic tablet as described above the painting gets then inkjet-printed to canvas. The heavily diluted ink is absorbed completely into the fabric of the canvas, leaving the surface structure largely intact. In the next step Michael Williams airbrushes over the inkjet print, in a process that leaves hardly any physical traces on the canvas. It is only in his most recent works – of which just a small portion is on display at the show – that the artist makes a return to applying paint with a brush. But in these instances it is done rather simple and only for painting in specific areas of his figures so as to turn them into witnesses of their own painterly (hi)story.

When the canvases are stretched Michael Williams arranges the crisp white outlines of the inkjet prints to run askew to the edges of the physical frame of the canvas. The result is that when the paintings are hung on the white walls of the gallery, this imperfection encourages the viewer to speculate on the question of whether or not that picture is off-center. This element further serves to enhance the feeling of insecurity in the viewer.

Michael Williams was born in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, USA in 1978. His most recent solo exhibition were held at CANADA, New York and Veneklasen/ Werner, Berlin. New Paintings is Michael Williams' first show in Zurich.

For further information please contact Björn Alferts (b.alferts@presenhuber.com) at the gallery.

Opening hours: Tuesday to Friday, 11 am – 6 pm
Saturday, 11 am – 5 pm
Or by appointment

Parallel shows: Carroll Dunham
June 15 to July 19, 2014
Löwenbräu Areal, 2. Floor, Limmatstrasse 270

Valentin Carron, Ciao Muddy Plain
June 15 to July 19, 2014
Maag Areal, Zahnradstrasse 21, 8005 Zürich