

**MARC BAUER**

September 12 - October 17, 2020

Galerie Peter Kilchmann is pleased to present a new wall installation by Swiss artist Marc Bauer (\*1975 in Geneva; lives and works in Berlin and Zurich) in the gallery's project space. With the invitation to this project, we would like to honor Marc Bauer as the winner of the important Swiss art award Prix Meret Oppenheim 2020. A larger solo exhibition with new works by the artist is already being planned.

In recent years, Bauer has developed a demanding artistic repertoire with a focus on drawing. Using large groups of works, central themes around cultural and historical developments and our collective, social and political heritage are unraveled in a mosaic-like manner. Bauer's works are like narratives, which can be followed without difficulty thanks to his characteristic, very precise drawing style. Since 2019, the palette, previously almost exclusively reduced to black and white, has been expanded through the increasing use of colorful oil paint and chalk. The result is pictorial spaces of strong color intensity and radiance that underscore the narrative component so inherent in Bauer's works. The new installation in the gallery will comprise five oil paintings on canvas and a monumental, colorful wall painting. The paintings are each available separately.

As a starting point for his new group of works, Marc Bauer conducted extensive research on virtual reality simulations as a new technology of war. By participating in computer games, such as America's Army, soldiers have been recruited online from the gamer community for the US Army since 2013. If a player performs particularly well in virtual warfare through tactical maneuvers, he or she will receive a contract to join the real army. There the soldiers are prepared for the real war scenario with a virtual reality simulator. When they return from combat, they are often severely traumatized and are supposed to reduce their post-traumatic stress by means of virtual simulations that simulate peaceful, beautiful landscapes.

Inspired by the short film "My own Landscapes" by the French filmmaker Antoine Chapon from 2020, which deals with the subject as well, the narrative in Bauer follows a single hero who can be read like an alter ego to Chapon's protagonist Cyril. Cyril was a soldier who had developed landscapes for military computer games before he was recruited. In order to overcome his personal war trauma, he created his own utopian island in digital space, a kind of exile through which he can move freely using a VR headset.

In Bauer's work, the story of the protagonist begins with a monumental, apocalyptic scene on the left wall of the room, which is strongly inspired by Pieter Bruegel's painting "The Triumph of Death" from 1562. A deep, intense red makes the landscape painted on the wall with its jumbled figures blaze like an inferno. A painting placed on the wall painting with the pictorial title *Trauma I*, 70 x 50 cm shows the portrait fragment of a melancholy looking man with diabolic, red-colored facial features. A second painting, *Trauma II*, 70 x 50 cm, shows the hybrid portrait of a young man with a horse face. Another horse's head, which draws reference to Picasso's Guernica, overshadows the face and seems to transpose his tortured inner state to the outside. The distortion in both paintings is based on Instagram filters. The color shades in *Trauma II* are softer and more soothing. Gentle shades of blue, green, and yellow lead into the painting of the middle and right wall, which makes an abstract war scene fade away in front of the curved waves of turquoise-blue water. Two central paintings entitled *Control/ Exhaustion* and *Control/ Running* (each 90 x 130 cm) show idyllic island scenes in rich southern colors, reminiscent of painters such as Matisse and the zeitgeist of the "Joie de Vivre" of the French Riviera. A painting juxtaposed to the wall painting shows the protagonist bent over in front, struggling for breath after intense sporting activity. He seems exhausted, but the race over the gravel, the swimming in the sea, and the peaceful nature that seems to move in the wind convey a feeling of temporary calm. Bauer sketches here the controversial idea of a self-created, virtual parallel world and the questions of freedom, territorial claim, and identity that arise with it.

In 2019, Marc Bauer was awarded the GASAG Art Prize 2020, which is specifically aimed at artists at the intersection between art and science and is presented in cooperation with the Berlinische Galerie. A solo exhibition at the Berlinische Galerie, which honors Marc Bauer as the prize winner, will open during the Berlin Art Week on September 8, 2020. Among others, past solo exhibitions have been held in the following institutions: Istituto Svizzero, Milan; De La Warr Pavilion Bexhill on Sea (both 2020); The Drawing Room, London (2019); Musée Jenisch, Vevey (2016); FRAC Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur, Marseille (2015); Museum Folkwang, Essen (2014); Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris (2013); Recent group exhibitions include (selection): "Smoke and Mirrors", Kunsthau Zürich (on view until October 11); "United by AIDS", Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich; "Fly me to the Moon", Kunsthau Zürich, Zurich (both 2019); 21st Sydney Biennial, Sydney (2018); "10 Years Drawing Prize", Centre Pompidou, Paris (2017) and "Il y a de l'autre", Rencontres d'Arles, Arles (2016). Bauer's works are included worldwide in public collections such as the Aargauer Kunsthau, Aarau; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum Folkwang, Essen; Nouveau Musée National de Monaco (NMNM) and at various locations of the Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain (FRAC), France, to name but a few.

The exhibition will open simultaneously with Zurich Art Weekend.

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