

Tobias Kaspar

April 15 - May 28, 2016

Galerie Peter Kilchmann is pleased to announce its upcoming solo exhibition with Swiss artist Tobias Kaspar. Alongside his newly completed film trilogy "Surface Apparent", Tobias Kaspar will also exhibit a group of new and recent works consisting of textile and sculptural works, as well as photographs; all related to the large-scale artwork THE STREET.

Produced by the Istituto Svizzero di Roma, THE STREET, as the title suggests, is an artwork in form of a street. It took place in a 150-meter long outdoor studio inside the Cinecittà Film Studios in Rome on March 11, 2016. The studio in question has been used for past decades for numerous film productions and while some of its parts can still be recognized as iconic Lower East Side architecture, others compose a patchwork representing various places and times. The location, with its traces of houses, stores, restaurants, cafes and hotels resembling street scenes from Paris, London, Rome and Los Angeles, serves as the basic structure and backdrop on which the artist developed his own universe.

The first room of the gallery is dedicated to textile wall works (all untitled) for which Kaspar approached a production mode of interplay between abstract imagery and its material support. He worked closely with a Swiss fabric manufacturer known as a supplier for the haute couture industry and used a high-tech textile that is composed of glass powder. From the front the paintings seem to be grey monochromes but reveal upon a second look delicate abstract geometric patterns that were engraved in the reflective surface of the fabric by laser. They become visible only when fully illuminated (e.g. when photographed with flash) and evoke 'de-saturated' versions of the concrete paintings by Swiss artist Richard Paul Lohse. In fact, the geometric patterns have already gone through a cycle of appropriation as they have already been used by the artist in his silkscreen series "Stripped Bare / The Gentlewoman" (2013 - 2015). They originate from the magazine The Gentlewoman, whose designers must have been heavily influenced by Lohse himself. The paintings address issues that connect modernity (and its utopias) with our contemporary post-modern anxieties and production systems.

The sculptural assemblages are combinations of found ephemeral objects such as empty perfume bottles, take-away coffee cups, empty ketchup and sugar packets and their bronze casts; of which some have been cut and polished (see invitation card). The used and discarded elements originate from New York and have been used as props and decoration for Kaspar's scene "NY 1995" which was shown inside THE STREET in Rome, as well as at the Art Basel Parcours in 2015.

The film trilogy "Surface Apparent" consisting of "Hydra Life" (2013), "Black Noire" (2014) and "Back Row" (2016) complements the exhibition. The films were all made in a similar production mode; a small film crew enters a specific environment, in which a main actor, model or performer is inserted, filming details, surfaces, and movements. What seems to be an improvisational approach and shot without a script, is a complex study of presentation and representation. The films – shot in special high definition and on slow motion in order to achieve a high image quality – have documentary moments but are kept abstract. "Hydra Life", shot in Berlin, takes its name from a facial cream by a high end fashion brand and addresses issues of beauty, ritual and contemplation. A female figure wearing a bathrobe in a luxurious hotel bathroom is shown while observing herself in the mirror and applying cream on her face and neck in an almost meditative way. "Black Noire" was inspired by Kaspar's interest in figures such as the dandy, the diva, the impostor or outlaw; as well as by his fascination in disguises and different ways of masking oneself. Shot in a luxury fashion boutique in Rome, the camera work is gradual and the settings are not clearly distinguished between surfaces, reflections, re- and presentation of clothing; and architectural scenes. "Back Row" was shot in a professional dry cleaning in Rio de Janeiro and Rome and shows with slow camera movements the surfaces of towels and linens being washed, pressed and steamed, as well as the hands of the workers. Poetic and unmasking at the same time, Kaspar successfully generates in his trilogy "Surface Apparent" a distinct visual language.

Tobias Kaspar (born 1984 in Basel) lives since 2013 in Rome. In 2012 he founded his eponymous jeans line, he is co-founder of PROVENCE, an eight-issue magazine dedicated to leisure. His artworks are often conceived as larger bodies of works and bare titles such as Lumpy Blue Sweater (2010), Bodies in the Backdrop (2012), The Bling Ring (2013), Friends, Lovers & Financiers (2014) and Two Cities - Two Lives (2015). His work has been shown in institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw (2016), Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art, San Francisco (2015). Solo exhibitions include Kunsthalle São Paulo (2015), CAFAM Biennale, Beijing (2014), Kunsthalle Wien (2014), Kunsthalle St. Gallen (2014), Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis (2013), Artists Space, New York (2013), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2012), Kunsthalle Zürich (2011), Museum Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2011), Kunsthau Bregenz (2011), Künstlerhaus Stuttgart (2010).