

Marc-Antoine Fehr

FÊTES

January 17 until March 1, 2014

Galerie Peter Kilchmann is happy to rediscover renowned Swiss artist Marc-Antoine Fehr for a wider audience. For the first time, the gallery presents a solo exhibition featuring the full power of Fehr's paintings and drawings. Born in 1953, the artist now lives between Zurich and Pressy-sous-Dondin in Burgundy.

Fehr, the autodidact, has dealt with classical, figurative painting since the 1980's. His impressive, mostly large-format works oscillate between classical and magic realism. Often located in monumental dream worlds, populated with real and artificial figures, they narrate about unfulfilled longings, of loneliness and of events in alternate universes.

Under the title *Fêtes*, in English *Festivals* or *Celebrations*, Fehr presents his new paintings and works on paper; around 20 new works will be on display. They are not to be perceived as a series but as independent imageries. Usually only after years, Fehr is re-attracted by found toy figures and objects, mostly drawn by the ravages of time and use, and breathes new life into them. Also, motifs found in his immediate environment play a major role.

In the large-format work "Der Verschollene" (see invitation card, "The Man Who Disappeared", 2013, oil on canvas, 275 x 400 cm) a small advertisement figure made of iron acted as a model. It is a servant with a tray that Fehr has found years ago in an antique shop. The figure is floating horizontally, in front of a neutral, blue background, without revealing a story - and still, it begs the question where the solidified creature has raptured off. The title refers to Kafka's novel, in which protagonist Karl Rossmann, employed as a bell boy for some time, is mercilessly dismissed because of his moral courage. Fehr's vision can be taken as a monument to this small, brave and insignificant man and to all of his kind that once lived and are still living.

The no less impressive work "Le baiser des masques" (2013, oil on canvas, 320 x 285 cm) illustrates the immersion of two faces or rather masks into each other in diverse film stills; there are 77 suspended moments of encounter and subsequent separation.

Other works deal with familiar subjects or visions. The servant meets us again lying on a toy car (Reklameauto im Schnee, 2013, oil on canvas, 120 x 160 cm) or standing in the night (Der Diener, 2013, oil on canvas, 160 x 120 cm). Interior views of masks make unknown, strange downsides visible (Grand détail du masque retourné, 2013, oil on canvas, 200 x 270 cm). "Le livreur égaré" (2013, oil on canvas, 200 x 270 cm) in English "The stray deliverer" shows a horse-drawn carriage with a coachman riding along a meagre landscape fragment. Another work depicts an abandoned resting place. Tables and benches are deserted, the traces of former sociability long wiped out (Rastplatz, 2013, oil on canvas, 100 x 250 cm).

Works from Fehr, in particular from the Pierrot and Midas cycle, were exhibited in the solo exhibition *Still Life / Le paysage sans fin* at Helmhaus, Zurich, 2011. The corresponding catalog will be available at the gallery. Fehr was further included in group exhibitions such as *Voir est une Fable* at Chambres à Part, Paris, 2013, *Interiors* at the Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau, 2009, or *Diana und Actaeon* at the Museum Kunstpalast, Dusseldorf, 2008.

The Kunstmuseum Zürich, the Aargauer Kunsthaus, the Kunstmuseum Olten, the Federal Art Collection in Berne and the Collection Frieder Burda in Baden-Baden, to name but a few, have works by Fehr in their collections.