



KUNST MERAN
im Haus der Sparkasse
MERANO ARTE
edificio Cassa di Risparmio

PRESS RELEASE

EXHIBITION PAINTINGS

**Charles Avery, Paolo Chiasera, Dorothy Miller, Martin Pohl,
Lea von Wintzigerode, Amelie von Wulffen**

Opening: Friday, February 3, 2017, 7pm

Duration: February 4 – April 17, 2017

Curator: Christiane Rekade

In the last few years various artists have stepped back to study painting in depth as an expressive means, with all the possible alternative approaches to this medium. They see in painting a possibility of emancipation from actual working conditions. Working conditions that are ever more specified by the accelerated and market driven situation in the exhibition business. The group show 'exhibition paintings' gathers the works of six international artists, who recognize the potential of painting in order to rethink the exhibition format, to illuminate the relationships between curator, artist and the public – and in particular to show an alternative to the contemporary situation.

While Charles Avery, Paolo Chiasera and Martin Pohl use painting to conceive new exhibitions (or have them curated by someone else) that only take place on canvas, Dorothy Miller, Lea von Wintzigerode and Amelie von Wulffen investigate in their works the delicate mechanisms and relations between the artist and their audience.

Since 2010 the Italian artist **Paolo Chiasera** has been working on a series with the title *exhibition paintings*. They are as the title says, "paintings of exhibitions", that is to say exhibitions realised on canvas. Chiasera developed his *exhibition paintings* further to the effect that he curated the painted exhibitions himself or conceived them in collaboration with a curator. In this way they are free of the usual restrictions on the process of making an exhibition: there is a free choice of exhibition space. The artworks can be chosen and shown independently of insurance costs, transport and production costs, climatic, conservatory, and political conditions: a painting



by René Magritte can just as easily be integrated into an exhibition as a 2012 sculpture by the American Oscar Tuazon.

What the French writer André Malraux created in 1947 with his *Musée Imaginaire* is taken up by Chiasera and further developed: for the (painted) exhibition *The Art of Conversation* for example two artists even produced new works that now only exist in painted form. The art critic Jennifer Allen considers this to be a completely new approach: “Chiasera was quoting the past and the future. That’s a first. [...] Instead of proposing a radical break from Conceptual Art, Chiasera [...] manages to make some novel moves on a well-travelled territory.”¹

The British artist **Charles Avery** also takes up the notion of the *Musée Imaginaire* in his work series *It Means, It Means!* (2013) and takes further considerations of the exhibition as a place of artistic and curatorial production. *It Means, It Means!* (2013) is an exhibition in the ‘Museum of Art’ on the island of Onomatopoeia invented by Charles Avery. For the first art exhibition on the island Avery invited the London-based curator Tom Morton to curate the exhibition. Ultimately, Avery’s drawings show the installation in the museum and also give an insight into the reaction of the public. One for example sees the islanders looking at works from Kazimir Malevich by way of Sol Lewitt to Tino Sehgal.

In contrast to Avery’s fictive museum, the exhibition rooms in the paintings of South Tyrolean artist **Martin Pohl** are recognisable as actual museum spaces: in the completely white rooms, reminiscent of computer renderings in their precision, of selected museums and institutions from the Pinakothek der Moderne, München to the Götz collection and the Museum der Moderne in Salzburg, the artist paints his own not (yet) existent works. The gestural paintings generously take up the floors, walls or even the ceilings of the rooms and in this way they become part of the work .

For Chiasera, Avery and Pohl, the canvas is the place to realise their exhibitions, with Malraux it was the book that provided the framework for the *Musée Imaginaire*. With the possibilities of photography and the easy reproducibility of the artwork, the catalogue gained in importance as a lasting documentation.

1 Jennifer Allen: Rococo Conceptualism. In: Mousse 37/2013, p.112



The work series *The Americans* for example consists of 13 painted covers of historical exhibition catalogues. The catalogue covers were painted by an anonymous artist and presented under the pseudonym **Dorothy Miller**. Dorothy Miller was curator at the Museum of Modern Art in New York from 1934 to 1969 and is considered to be one of the most influential people in the development of modern American art. The painted catalogue covers refer to a series of travelling exhibitions that she curated, "The New American Painting", which between 1940 and 1960 were shown in eight European countries. They show how the exhibitions communicated (for example, the titles in different languages represent the journey of the exhibition) and give clues as to how they were seen and interpreted.

The young artist **Lea von Wintzingerode** also finds in painting a possible reaction to an art orientated towards quick legibility and digital representation. In her work the artist focuses on the relationship between spectator and image. The contents of her pictures are often potential exhibition situations or moments of a performance. Viewing 'Dancing Figure' (2014), for instance, one becomes immediately part of a circle that forms around a small dancing sculpture. Movement and standstill, looking and being looked at, performing or watching – these essential experiences of an exhibition are underpinned by the experimental hanging, which she combines with a sound installation of fragments of piano music composed by Wintzingerode herself.

Amelie von Wulffen employs painting and drawing in order to capture a rarely talked about "image of exhibitions" with self-irony and an inclination to exaggeration: in her comic, consisting of sketch-like pencil drawings, von Wulffen describes the fears and fantasies of the artist and her life (or survival) in the art world. *Am Kühlen Tisch* (2013) tells in partly autobiographic, often absurd scenes of the stress of sitting next to the right people at the right table at dinner after the opening, of secretly Googling one's own name and of the platitudes that are exchanged at openings. Von Wulffen combines the comic with an installation of large-scale artist portraits, still lives and painted school chairs. In doing so she sets old-masterly and modern styles and techniques next to elements of handicraft and hobby painting. The poses from Max Beckmann, which von Wulffen recreated from a self-portrait of the artist, she combines with a kitschy pink lake with sailing boats. Amelie von Wulffen upsets – just as in the comic – the image of known and familiar art with an unexpected sometimes almost embarrassing or unsettling glimpse into the "art world unconscious".²



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