

PRESS RELEASE

BEL ÉTAGE *GROUP SHOW*

25.04. — 28.04.23

Opening Wednesday, 24. April 6 – 9 pm

Potsdamer Straße 93, 10785 Berlin

Opening hours during Gallery Weekend Berlin:

Thu 11 – 7 pm | Fr 11 – 9 pm | Sat 11 – 7 pm | Sun 11 – 7 pm

Enrico Bach | Arno Beck | **Hirofumi Fujiwara** | Lukas Glinkowski | Steffen Kern | **Nina Laaf** | **Gary Schlingheider** | **Maria Schumacher** | Sophie Ullrich

We are pleased to announce **BEL ÉTAGE**, a group show together with **Evelyn Drewes | Gallery** during Gallery Weekend Berlin. In the splendid upper floor of Potsdamer Strasse 93, nine artistic positions converge to animate the BEL ÉTAGE with painting, installation, sculpture.

Enrico Bach's (*1980 in Leipzig) paintings are a self-reflection on fundamental questions of pictorial architecture: in his compositions, depth of space meets colorful surface painting and two-dimensionality meets spatial constructions. Bach's layered areas of color and pattern create the illusion of a more or less deep space. At the same time, he abandons the conventional compositional pattern of a centered motif: the edges and background of the picture become deeper levels, often overlaid by large monochrome, but not homogeneous surfaces. Enrico Bach completed his master's degree in 2011 at the State Academy of Fine Arts Karlsruhe under Prof. Gustav Kluge. The artist lives and works in Karlsruhe.

Hirofumi Fujiwara's (*1984, Hiroshima, Japan) figures, modelled in clay and plastic, stand, sit or lie in space, at rest in themselves, transparent walls surround their fragile bodies. Fujiwara's Neutopians are enthusiasts; they bear witness to a romantic longing for the unattainable, they move between worlds. Their contemplative gaze directed towards the indeterminate, they carry with them references of Japanese as well as European-Western culture. They seem youthful and yet ageless, androgynous and detached from any stereotypes - isolated from this world, yet anchored in the moment, in being-so. In our ever faster moving, ever modification-oriented society, Fujiwara's Neutopians embody both longing and ideal. Hirofumi Fujiwara graduated in 2015 as a master student of Prof. Stephan Balkenhol at the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste Karlsruhe. He lives and works in Hamburg.

Nina Laaf (*1977 in Hilden) deals in her work with strategies of irritation, alienation, context shifting and questioning visual habits. In her artistic work, she examines material qualities and their limits. Her latest works are characterised by a play between presence and absence and the question of what constitutes the actual, the essential, the original in colour and form. She completed her master's degree at the State Academy of Fine Arts Karlsruhe under Prof. Harald Klingelhöller in 2017. In 2018, the artist received the

Hanna Nagel Prize Karlsruhe and was a scholarship holder at the Cité Internationale Des Arts Paris in 2019. Nina Laaf lives and works in Karlsruhe.

Painting and sculpture are mutually dependent in the work of **Gary Schlingheider** (*1983, Detmold) and arise from the preoccupation with the transgression of boundaries between the two genres. Colour and form form the focus of the painter and sculptor's work. He works in large formats, with powerful opaque colours and geometric, reduced bodies. With a reference to art historical models such as the Minimalists, Ellsworth Kelly or Frank Stella, Schlingheider explores the boundaries between painting and sculpture anew. Gary Schlingheider completed his studies at the Universität der Künste Berlin as a master student of Prof. Christine Streuli in 2017. He is the winner of the Manfred Fuchs Prize 2021, the Loth Sculpture Prize of art KARLSRUHE 2020 and the Difrung Prize for Sculpture 2017. He lives and works in Berlin and Ostwestfalen-Lippe.

In her paintings, **Maria Schumacher** (*1983, Bucharest, Romania) is concerned with the creation of narrative-psychological spaces within which she deals with the complexity of relationship structures and, more generally, with the fundamental questions of human existence. States such as loneliness, fear, grief, love and sexuality and their universal nature preoccupy her as much as the use of patterns, ornamental arrangements and the simultaneous ritual charging of signs and symbols. Folkloristic references found in her works have their origin in Schumacher's Romanian roots and her involvement with Balkan folk art. Her works create a meditative space that challenges a slowed-down aesthetic perception and at the same time invites us to engage with existential questions of meaning. Maria Schumacher lives and works in Leipzig. She studied painting at the Leipzig Academy of Visual Arts (HGB) in the Neo Rauch and H. C. Ottersbach class from 2005 to 2011. She completed her master's degree at the San Francisco Art Institute in the US as part of a Fulbright scholarship from 2011 to 2012. Schumacher currently works as an artistic assistant at the HGB.

For further information please contact Rita Burster: mail@galerieburster.com