

PRESS RELEASE

galerie burster berlin

Christian Bär | *love is not love*

20 January – 18 February 2023

Opening

Friday, 20 January 2023, 6 – 9 pm

We are pleased to present *love is not love*, Christian Bär's first solo exhibition at galerie burster Berlin.

For digital natives of the first hour, some of Christian Bär's paintings are likely to evoke a nostalgic longing. Especially those in which strokes – or more precisely: certain stroke patterns – can be seen that are immediately reminiscent of early computer graphics programmes such as Microsoft Paint. The uniqueness of the early digital strokes was that they were unintentionally scribbly, individual lines were interrupted for no reason, indeed they looked like the first attempts at a drawing that would never become one but would remain at the intersection of art and procrastination.

Digital natives stand before a painting like *Neo-Cowboy* by Christian Bär thus like Caspar David Friedrich's monk in front of the sea: gazing longingly into an expanse believed lost. If the 90s aesthetics of digital line work refers to anything, it is to a time when cyberspace was still unfounded and largely unsettled; when its use still opened up possibilities and utopias and was associated with a democratic hope.

Now, of course, it doesn't stop at this reference to early digital times, which is also experiencing a renaissance in contemporary apps like Snapchat anyway, where people can scribble over every conceivable image. Rather, the line work in Bär's works is transformed in several ways: in terms of colour, size, but above all in terms of materiality, they quickly leave behind the indulgence in the beginnings of the information age. His works are by no means purely post-digital, however, the transfer in oil on canvas always takes place in an interplay with the iPad: layers that are created on the canvas are digitised and those that are created digitally are transferred to the canvas. On the iPad, the image is not present as a whole, but divided into individual layers. This is common for a graphics programme, but unusual for the creation of a painting – especially for a painting that is visually linked to Abstract Expressionism and not, as one would assume with paintings assembled in this way, to Constructivism.

This tension between gestural impression and actual constructedness is not only inherent in the paintings, but can also be seen. Working on different levels has an interesting effect on the completed paintings: they do not merge into one another in the picture, but remain visible as such, even becoming separate figures that relate to one another. By lying on top of each other, some layers are more visible than others, states of earlier layers are hidden or remain visible. Purple gestural broad brushstrokes partially conceal green-yellow graphic circles and are themselves overlaid by black scribbles. In this way, the conditions of one's own creation are always kept present and co-thematised.

The practical interweaving of digital and analogue work, which also aesthetically characterises Christian Bär's pictures through the different types of strokes and line management, is in turn an expression of a development that can be generally observed. Contrary to what has often been assumed, the digitalisation of almost all areas

of life does not lead to the analogue, material, haptic world losing importance. Quite the opposite: the former mental and actual separation of digital and public spaces, of the immaterial and the material has become obsolete in the meantime – rather, everything is indissolubly coupled with each other. Christian Bär's works clearly demonstrate, technically and aesthetically, these intermediary entanglements of contemporary culture.

— Annekathrin Kohout

Christian Bär (b.1989 in Stuttgart, lives and works in Leipzig) studied at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig with Prof. Ingo Meller from 2010 – 2015. He received his diploma with distinction in 2015. His works have been shown in numerous national and international solo and group exhibitions and are also represented in private and public collections, including the Hildebrand Collection, G2 Kunsthalle Leipzig, Staatliche Kunstsammlung Dresden and Kunstmuseum Reutlingen. In 2020, Bär received cultural funding from the Free State of Saxony.

For further information, please contact Miriam Schwarz: miriam@galerieburster.com

Opening hours: Wednesday – Friday 2 – 6 pm, Saturday 12 – 3 pm and by appointment