



# Event Horizon

24 Feb – 25 Mar 2017 at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery in London, United Kingdom



Event Horizon. Courtesy of Kristin Hjellegjerde

18 FEB 2017

Ghost-like figures float and waft through inky worlds of blue, grey and bruised purples. The canvases themselves are anything but two-dimensional planes, rather, they become semi-sculptural works, various pieces overlapping and appearing like patchwork skins, as if Dr Frankenstein had stitched through them. Paint, either overlaid in large swathes or daubed on in thick impasto is wiped, blended, swirled and gauged, fine feathered features drawn, ghostlike on top, or etched into the surface of the paint itself like embossing. Elsewhere, on paper, parts are sometimes burned away, leaving great gaping holes, or cut out, delicately, pieces freed and let loose to curl over like the fronds of a fern. Large, life-size sculptures, meanwhile, appear as if manifested out of air, brush strokes come to life, living sketches. These phantasmagorical, alluring and fey characters, in their slightly surrealist habitats, are the work of Berlin-based artist Ruprecht von Kaufmann. In Event Horizon he exhibits new works at Kristin Hjellegjerde, running from 24th of February – 25th of March 2017.

At the heart of von Kaufmann’s artistic practice is a blending of figurative painting with a sculptural approach, and an exploration of space and of the three-dimensional. His paintings take on an installation-like aura, sometimes spilling over the perfect linear bounds



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of the work itself, either through bits and pieces left hanging over, or, occasionally, jumping onto the walls of the gallery itself. The result is, in the words of writer Samantha Groenestyn, an “eerie phantasmal universe”, one in which we end up “staring tensely at his dot-eyed spectres, his tormented ghosts half appearing and half disappearing through the surface, writhing and struggling through mysteriously colourful and seemingly interminable mists. These figures writhe and float on buckled surfaces, the very canvas... reacting to the interventions and layers of paint he applies, to break free of the traditional smooth, level plane.”

However, the pivot upon which this all rests is the relationship between painting and sculpture, of the two- and three-dimensional and the plane upon which they intersect. Von Kaufmann finds himself obsessed with space (and, therefore, the illusion of it) and with surfaces, textures and the way in which paintings move and change within the space they are hung in. He paints not only on canvas, but on materials picked for their sculptural qualities – linoleum, sheet rubber, felt. “I find it fascinating that, by manipulating the surface, I can undermine the ‘singular viewpoint’,” he explains. “This notion that there is one single ideal viewing point for a painting – I want to challenge that. This idea does not exist with sculpture.”

This produces large sculptures that appear to be made out of arcs of light, but are in fact created out of Mylar stencils he has used for his paintings. With their paper-like appearance, and paint residue, they become drawings that appear mid air, as if paintings in space, manifested out of brushstrokes alone. They feel somehow insubstantial, not heavy like their bronze or marble counterparts. Instead, they bend and enfold space, a cosmic space-time planar jump, like the event horizon of a black hole. “In my paintings I want to create space, or the illusion of space and spaces,” says von Kaufmann. “From the paintings, figures try to burst outwards, out of these spaces. They challenge their environments, for they can only act within the laws that have been set for them within those spaces. The sculptures, on the other hand, are at once inside and outside, they are hollow yet they are also solid; it’s like taking a flat surface and bending it to circumscribe an imaginary shape.”

There are contradictions in von Kaufmann’s work too, in the deep, dark palette of the works, lending itself to intense brooding, and the light fragile outlines of figures that seem to float through his universe. The sureness of his hand, evident in deft brushstrokes and strong figuration, gives way to deep and delicate intricacies, a delicateness and lightness that implies dithering, introspection, the ability to become lost in a world of thought. This idea of the inside and outside starts to be pursued further, as he juxtaposes indoors with outdoors, breaking out and outside of the scenes he sets for his characters. “Human nature – or perhaps just my nature – oscillates between a yearning to break out and a yearning to retreat inside one’s head,” says the artist. “It’s almost like pulsing, between the two. I want the viewer to weave in and out of my paintings, be thrown into three dimensions through my sculptures, and glide back into the flat spaces of my drawings.”

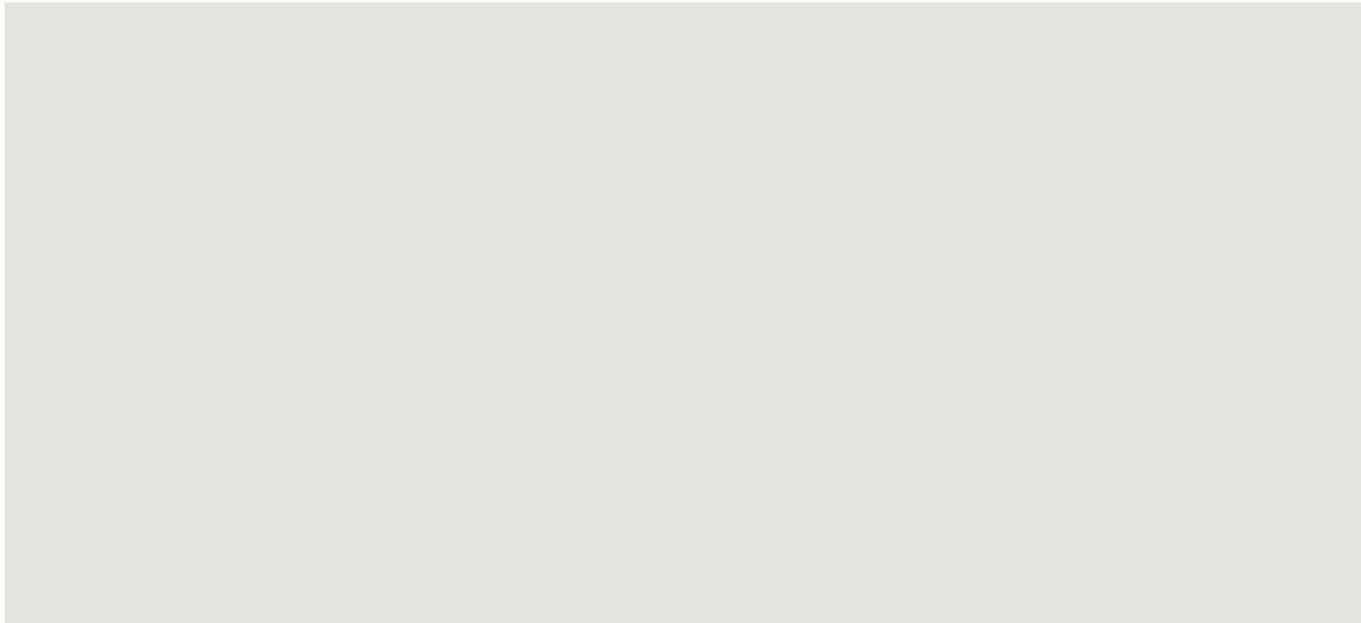
It is through this convergence of extremes, of space and flatness, vibrant and broken colour, of starting and ending, that von Kaufmann pursues a search for a higher meaning. “It’s almost like a higher meaning that can’t be found,” he muses. “It’s like trying to find a hole in the dark: you can walk slowly in ever tighter circles until you feel the edge with the sole of one foot.” You can circle ever closer until all those planes intersect, and the gravitational pull tugs you, pulls you in like a black hole, and all planes become one and then none.

**Ruprecht von Kaufmann** was born in 1974 in Munich, Germany, and educated at the Art Center College of Design, Los Angeles, CA, Ruprecht von Kaufmann focuses on bridging the gap of modernism to fuse old with new. Von Kaufmann's art is dynamic, and purposefully

so. He likes to draw the world around him and often comments on the life of painting and its diverse quality due to the ever changing knowledge and personality of the artist. Often, von Kaufmann's art will evolve as he draws and paints his idea on the canvas. At other times, the painting will develop a life of its own, and demands him to surrender and follow its guidance. For von Kaufman painting is like life, it evolves constantly. His artwork reflects this level of consideration, as his figurative work is just as thought-provoking to the viewer. Recent solo exhibitions include 'The God of Small and Big Things', Galerie Crone, Berlin (2016), 'Phantombild-Blaupause', Nordheimer Scheune Nordheim (2016), 'grösserbesserschnellermehr', Forum Kunst, Rottweil (2015), 'Die Sache mit den Sirenen', Galerie Rupert Pfab, Düsseldorf (2015) and 'Fabel', Georg Kolbe Museum, Berlin (2014). Von Kaufmann's work can be found in the collections of the Federal Republic of Germany, Deutsche Bundestag, the Hort Family Collection and the Uziyel Family Collection.

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### Opening hours

Tuesday to Saturday  
From 11am to 6pm

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### Captions

1. Event Horizon. Courtesy of Kristin Hjellegjerde
2. Event Horizon. Courtesy of Kristin Hjellegjerde
3. Event Horizon. Courtesy of Kristin Hjellegjerde

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