

"Verve"
WITH

SEBASTIAN HELLING
RICHARD SCHUR

PRIVATE VIEW 12th of February 2015
6:30 – 9:00PM

13th of February – 21st of March 2015

An onslaught of colour greets you as you walk into the gallery space, a battle between order and chaos taking over the walls. Patchwork canvases of colour blocks, neat and ordered – layered seemingly at random, yet with a careful, intuitive pattern – stand against explosions of messy lines and forms, graffiti-like scrawls of text and scribble vying for attention. In *Verve* (13th February – 21st March 2015), titular energy and enthusiasm spring forth from the paintings of Sebastian Helling and Richard Schur. While, on first appearance, their painting styles appear to be polar opposites, both share an interest in developing the expressive, emotional qualities of colour, creating a vibrant dialogue between mutually complementary opposites.

In the works of German artist Richard Schur, colour swatches at once obscure and reveal, layered atop one another in a deliberate, defined process. With their strong, Mondrian-like aesthetic (one of Schur's earliest influences), carefully-chosen colour palettes reflect a gradual build up of tone and texture. Each patch of colour is carefully applied, only to then be either wholly or partially obscured by another; indeed, at times previous colours are visible only by evidence left by the raised ridges of smothered layers of paint. In order to achieve this effect, Schur works first with studies, allowing his motifs to evolve over an extended period of time, playing around with colour choices as part of an intuitive process. This is then transferred to a larger canvas, on which the artist uses the formal language of geometry to gain a sense of clarity in the interaction of colours. Drawing on those artists who have gone before him, painting for Schur "is about creating new songs, not new sounds." It is also about bringing together the "light, spirit and atmosphere" of various locations around the world that have influenced him. Indeed, recent residencies in San Francisco, Paris and New York continue to feed into the verve that Schur seeks to create. Most of the works in this exhibition have been inspired by his residency in New York, drawing on the architecture of Manhattan, evening walks through Brooklyn, and night rides over the city's bridges.

In the works of Oslo-based Sebastian Helling, on the other hand, layers of paint are used in a different context, a direct reflection of physical movement. "My paintings are neither abstract nor figurative, neither gestural nor compositional," he explains.

"Layers of artistic languages overlap and deny each other. In the same spirit, my wish for communication (or anti-communication) is trapped within the relevance of the artwork." What we are presented with, then, are explosive canvases with splashes of paint and text, sometimes spray painted on, at other times applied with a brush and then stroked and smudged with fingers. While some appear mute – large canvases of beige with stark blurs of colour – others are intensely saturated, chromatic cornucopias or proliferations of painterly fireworks. Like Schur, he creates layer upon layer, simultaneously obscuring and tantalisingly revealing a recognisable motif just visible through elementary symbols and abstract language. He builds, reduces, and then improves, his artistic practice a process of refinement and kinetic energy, both destructive and productive. It is this tension between the positive and the negative that allows him to focus his work on the final outcome rather than a specific narrative or particular reference point – rather, they are embodiments of Helling's constant tearing apart and building back together again, an endless cycle of nature.

Together, Schur and Helling create an intriguing look at the relationship between painter and colour, and of the processes involved in the layering and stripping away of narrative. For, they argue, it is only once this has been done that a new song can be sung. "For me, abstraction is a place of collective and personal memories, experiences and emotions," concludes Schur. "Through a long, systematic and intuitive process, then, I aim to reflect the meaning of every brush stroke within the whole: anything can matter here."

**Verve runs from 12th of February – 21st of March 2015
at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London**

Information for journalists:

Sebastian Helling

Born in London in 1975, Oslo-based Sebastian Helling received his BA from the London College of Printing in 2001 and went on to receive an MA from the Royal College of Art two years later. In 2011 he received an MA from the Statens Kunsthøgskolen in Oslo. Recent solo exhibitions include *Gi Labb!*, Galleri Lab, Oslo (2014), *Grande Days*, Trafo Kunsthall, Asker (2013) and *When I was Young*, NoPlace, Oslo (2012). Helling has several shows coming up in 2015 in addition to Kristin Hjellegjerde, including at Nordic Contemporary in Paris and a solo exhibition at Diorama in Oslo. He has exhibited in group shows as far and wide as Norway, Sweden, Poland, the UK and USA.

Richard Schur

Munich-born Richard Schur (1971) studied at the Academy of Fine Arts Munich, graduating in 2000. From 2002 to 2008 he was Assistant Professor at his alma mater. Recent solo shows include *Flashes of Fiction*, Galerie der Moderne, Munich (2012/13) and *Edge of Light*, Galeria Manuel Ojeda, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (2011). Schur is the recipient of numerous awards and prizes, including the 2014 ISCP International Studio & Curatorial Programme in New York, as well as residencies and grants from the Centre Cultural Andraxt, Bavarian State Ministry of Sciences, Research and the Arts, and the Erwin and Gisela von Steiner Foundation, Munich. Schur's work can be found in collections including the Guangdong Museum of Art in China and the BMW Group art collection. He currently lives and works in Munich and Berlin.

Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery

Kristin Hjellegjerde opened her gallery in south west London in June 2012 following her move from New York. The gallery showcases cutting-edge contemporary art from emerging and established international artists, with the central concern being the creation of an intimate space in which artists can present a coherent body of work within a focused environment. Drawing on her own international background, Kristin Hjellegjerde seeks to discover and develop new talents by creating a platform through which they can be introduced to local and international audiences and by encouraging artistic exchange. Kristin Hjellegjerde also acts as an art advisor for both emerging private and corporate collectors. For more information, visit www.kristinhjellegjerde.com.

For further information and high-resolution images, please contact Kristin Hjellegjerde on khjellegjerde@mac.com.

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