

PRESS RELEASE

why
painting
now?
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exposition / exhibition
JEU-JEN / THU-FRI 14h-18h30
SAM / SPT 11h-17h

bureaux / offices
LUN-JEN / MON-FRI 9h-12h30
14h-18h30

PRESS RELEASE

On Thursday 17 September 2009, on the occasion of the forthcoming "Nuit des Bains" in Geneva, BFAS Blondeau Fine Art Services is pleased to present, in its space at 5, rue de la Muse, the works of fourteen international artists under the title *Why Painting Now?*

Creative and expressive possibilities in the visual arts underwent a rapid expansion during the twentieth century. Duchamp invented the ready-made; in the 1960s and 1970s, happenings, installations, Land Art, Body Art, video and photography were among the media used by visual artists. *The death of painting* was widely announced. Yet in recent times, painting has made a comeback, seeing its prestige restored in the eyes of collectors and institutions alike. In late 2002, the Centre Pompidou presented the exhibition *Cher Peintre, Lieber Maler, Dear Painter. Figurative Painting since the Last Picabia*. It attempted, in the form of a genealogical tree, to contextualize the "return" of a kind of figurative painting that had emerged over the course of the 1990s. Between 2004 and 2005, Charles Saatchi presented in London a cycle of three exhibitions entitled *The Triumph of Painting*. In 2007, with the exhibition *What is Painting? Contemporary Art from the Collection*, New York's MOMA examined the place of painting in contemporary art from the 1960s to the present. Thus the return to painting seems to have come about through opposition to digital art and the proliferation of computer screens. Does painting, like writing, remain one of the essential means of expression? Can it still be that timeless medium through which tangible contact with the world is possible?

For this exhibition, we have focused mainly on non-figurative pictures in which the spotlight falls on the "painter's gesture" and an aestheticizing conceptualism. Alongside the most important painters of their generation, such as Martin Kippenberger and Albert Oehlen - to whose number must be added Mel Bochner and Jim Shaw, whose influence on the current artistic scene has been decisive - we exhibit a generation of young artists for whom painting is the preferred means of expression: Francis Baudevin, Alex Brown, Daniel Hesidence, Mamie Holst, Alan Michael, Todd Norsten, Davis Rhodes, Sterling Ruby, Dan Walsh and Johannes Wohnseifer.

Martin Kippenberger's picture from the series *Krieg Böse* (1991) deals with the theme of war. It shows a Santa Claus on a tank, a very touchy subject in the immediate wake of German reunification. Albert Oehlen began his career as a representational painter but in the mid-1980s began to concentrate on abstract and experimental pictures. The work that we show dates from 1988, when he was living in Spain alongside Martin Kippenberger. Jim Shaw's picture, *Land of Octopus*, comes from the series *O-ism*, a religion imagined by the painter on the basis of Christian doctrine; the background to his "hyper-realist" treatment has affinities with 1950s Abstract Expressionism. In Alex Brown's *Untitled* series, the complex images lie deep within the canvas and can be difficult to decipher. Mamie Holst plunges into the depths of the unconscious in her series *Landscape before Dying*, all in nuances of gray, black and white, while Johannes Wohnseifer, with his series *Spam Paintings*, demystifies the unwanted e-mails that pepper our inboxes.

In the multimedia epoch, has painting anything still to say?
The question *Why Painting Now?* has never been more topical.

PRIVATE VIEW during the Nuit des Bains: Thursday 17 September 2009 from 18.00

Press dossiers and h-d illustrations available on demand

BFAS Blondeau Fine Art Services moved in 2000 to 5 rue de la Muse in the heart of the Quartier des Bains in Geneva. Consultants and connoisseurs in art since 1820, BFAS Blondeau Fine Art Services sells works to collectors and institutions world wide. It has a unique reference library comprising more than 14,000 titles. Aspiring to share its vision of contemporary and emerging art, BFAS Blondeau Fine Art Services mounts regular exhibitions at its dedicated gallery-space, 5 rue de la Muse, showing artists such as Alex Brown, Fabrice Gygi, Louise Lawler, Dan McCarthy, Raymond Pettibon and Jim Shaw.

www.bfasblondeau.com