VAN DER GRINTEN GALERIE

Marcus Neufanger

Silent Hirst

08.06.2019–28.07.2019

The Van der Grinten Galerie presents a new Marcus Neufanger solo show, 'Silent Hirst', an extensive selection of mainly recent large-format drawings from the 'Portraits' series.

In this ongoing work series Marcus Neufanger programmatically pursues a concept stringent in both form and content: a single subject – the self-cultivated image of the artist – together with an additional graphic element in the form of lettering/text; a single, vertical format of 100 x 70 cm; a uniform, unvarying technique – oil pastel on paper –; a limited color pallet and a consistently high degree of stylizing. This work, which began in 2005, has produced a thoroughly homogeneous ensemble. There is no conclusion in sight.

Marcus Neufanger uses photographic images of the artists of his/our time as the basis for the portraits. Subjects range from performance artists of the 60s/70s to undisputed icons of contemporary art history to lesser-known figures and Neufanger's own artist friends. Self-presentation served in the art world as a controllable vehicle for a personal statement about identity, standpoint, positioning and relevance vis-à-vis the pubic long before photography

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arrived to increasingly magnify the importance of personal image and a pervasive media presence. Artists have good reason for being particularly sensitive to the impact of such images, and are adept at using them to their own advantage. Early works of Albrecht Dürer give us a prime example of how the targeted self-presentation of the artist can be deployed in a clever, calculated and meaningful manner. This theme represents a significant facet of art history in which aspects such as strategies of perception and efficacy as well as frames of reference within art are explored.

By taking the liberty to appropriate pre-existing self-presentations of deceased, older and younger fellow artists, Marcus Neufanger has brought forth a cohesive tableau of faces, physical posture and quotations that offers a very interesting art history lesson: behind his seemingly simple, slightly playful pictures lurks reflection on a profound, even existential issue, one of central significance to the work of every artist. Namely: that of overcoming transience.