

LEIGH WELLS, *Configuration*

Januar 25th - March 22nd 2025

Opening: Friday, Januar 24th, 6pm to 9 pm

To get the year 2025 off to an auspicious start the Van Der Grinten Galerie is delighted to announce a new collaboration, with American artist Leigh Wells (*1964, lives and works in Sausalito, California).

Leigh Wells' first solo show in our Cologne gallery space will give visitors the opportunity to experience the unique quality of her work for themselves as they view the ca. 30 pieces on display. These works on paper, based on collage technique, consist of mainly monochromatic painted surfaces in various colors and geometrical forms, combined with high-quality black and white reproductions of works cut out of old art books, mostly photographs of classical sculpture with organic, sensual surfaces. Discreet pencil-drawn elements – lines or subtle shadowing – compliment the geometrical sections, contributing a tactile vibrancy and rhythm that throws the abstract compositions into high relief. Occasional painted interventions with visible brush strokes result in a contrasting encounter with the more or less smooth surfaces.

Located between Constructivism à la Malevich and echoes of Art Deco purism, these compositions play with the idea of balance, dynamics and harmony of form and are also reminiscent of musically inspired variations on a theme. Built on a stringent structural principal they are nevertheless characterized by lightness and fluency.

The formal reduction of these abstract, streamlined Leigh Wells works lends them an archaic quality that appeals to deep intellectual and emotional sensibilities that are difficult to describe in words. This attribute is perhaps best expressed in terms of moods in which the deliberate spatial and narrative ambiguity heightens the expressive tension.

Leigh Wells earned a BFA from the University of San Francisco with subsequent art studies at Parsons/ The New School, New York where she was an instructor; Crown Point Press and the San Francisco Art Institute. She is a 2022 Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant recipient, was a SFMOMA SECA Award nominee and an artist member of Minnesota Street Studios in San Francisco. Her work appears frequently in The New York Times and Harper's Magazine, and has been featured in Elle Decor among other publications.