

Matèria

Joachim Lenz

The benefit of doubt

18.05.2024 -

12.07.2024

Matèria is pleased to present *The benefit of doubt*, the first solo exhibition at the gallery by Joachim Lenz - opening on May 18 - curated by Akiko Bernhöft.

Joachim Lenz, born in 1981, trained at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Munich with Sean Scully and Günther Förg, places the complex pleasure of the act of painting at the center of his practice. Its through this process that Lenz reflects on matter as an element that lends meaning to the artwork: by applying multiple layers of paint on a canvas and often overlaying previously finished motifs, the artist gives the impression that the objects in the painting have been fixed to the pictorial surface in a particular way or have formed directly out of it. The surface of the painting - made up of flat and fragmented areas and in some cases simple horizon lines that vaguely suggest the space of an environment - adds an atmosphere of unusual suspension to the depiction of the unfolding of events.

Indeed, the imagery in Lenz's work appears whimsical and unsettling. We are faced with everyday and familiar objects, often humanized, performing strange actions. Banana peels sinking into the abyss, abandoned cigarettes burning, piles of hands, a single extended bare foot and a humanoid tree stump smoking a cigarette. These are the figures that inhabit his paintings; inert and introverted, whilst also bored and defiant.

The protagonists dash with enthusiasm, surrender to gravity, crawl, stretch upwards, or remain motionless. Their bodies oscillate between autonomy and external determination, between agility and indolence, or maintain a state of rest projecting an unsettling appearance. Joachim Lenz's paintings are permeated with suspended and indefinable atmospheres, alluding to a self-destructive condition, in a dialogue between paradox, humor, and catastrophe.

Irony and paradox manifest when the artist engages with classic icons of art history such as the still lifes, garlands, heaps and piles of hands. Once icons of art history - benedictory, generative, and laden with meaning - the hands depicted by Lenz, stripped of the rest of the body, multiplied abundantly, lie solemnly, resigned to their fate in a realm of dissociation.

As the curator Akiko Bernhöft writes in the text accompanying the exhibition: "As strikingly naturalistic as Joachim Lenz's images may be, they always head towards an intersection between the familiar and the unreal. They open up a space that challenges our seemingly familiar visual experiences, sometimes sharply cynical and sometimes with an ironic wink. Why is it worth distancing oneself from reality in this way? Because, unlike a mere reproduction of reality, these images express a psychological constitution of the world, with all its absurdities, states of waiting, and steadfast dwelling within oneself. Smoking, lying down, stretching, falling."

Joachim Lenz (1981, Germany) lives and works in Berlin. He studied painting at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Munich with Sean Scully and Günther Förg where he graduated in 2009. In 2004 and 2005 he studied at the Facultad de Bellas Artes of the Universidad Complutense, Madrid. His work is represented in international private collections. The artist has taken part in numerous group exhibitions, most recently at the Credo Bonum Gallery (Sofia, 2023), Obscura Gallery (Seoul, 2022) and at Atelierhof Kreuzberg (Berlin, 2022). Solo presentations of his work were held at the the One Kids Museum (Seoul, 2024); at Pfortnerhaus Off Space (Freiburg, 2024); and at Matèria (Rome, 2022).

Based in the neighbourhood of San Lorenzo in Rome, Matèria opened its doors to the public in 2015. The gallery proposes an exhibition programme that touches upon all aspects of Contemporary Art. Since its founding, Matèria's purpose has been the furthering and development of the work of its selected group of Artists. The gallery programme features four exhibitions per calendar year, conceived and produced directly with its artists and often in dialogue with the space through a site specific approach. Matèria's gallery shows strive to further the research and experimentation aspects of artistic practice, with the results of this approach often showcased in a growing list of Italian and international art fairs.

Matèria represents the work of Fabio Barile, Karen Knorr, Mario Cresci, Xiaoyi Chen, Giuseppe De Mattia, Sunil Gupta, Marta Mancini, Joachim Lenz, Francisca Valador, Stefano Canto, Bekhbaatar Enkhtur and Eduardo Fonseca e Silva.

Joachim Lenz
The benefit of doubt

18 May 2024 - 12 July 2024

Matèria | Via dei Latini, 27 - Roma

materiagallery.com

Matèria

Hours
From Tuesday to Saturday
from 11 am to 7 pm

Contact
contact@materiagallery.com

Press enquiries
UC studio, press@ucstudio.it
Roberta Pucci
roberta@ucstudio.it
mob: +39 340 817 4090
Chiara Ciucci Giuliani
chiara@ucstudio.it
mob: +39 392 917 3661