

Everything I do has an underlying political question
GERALD LOVELL, SIMON MARTIN, KENRICK MCFARLANE

April 8 - May 28, 2022

Rämistrasse 33

Galerie Peter Kilchmann is pleased to present *Everything I do has an underlying political question* - a new group exhibition with works by Gerald Lovell, Simon Martin and Kenrick McFarlane. On view are large, medium and small format oil on canvas paintings, specially created for the exhibition spaces of our dependance in the Rämistrasse.

Everything I do has an underlying political question - the title of the exhibition is both a statement and a question: does everything have to be interpreted politically? The three young positions in the exhibition answer this question through their art with a clear no and create a poetic space free of identities, stereotypes and instrumentalisation. The subjects and colours in their works bring joy, simply by means of their captivating aesthetics and their playful narratives, that are not to mention also autobiographically inspired. In a time in which not only the creation of art, but all our areas of life, our actions and decisions are ascribed a political intention, the three artists come along with their paintings like a breeze of fresh air. Not following a fixed canon, they show us that it is okay to retreat once in a while, to *withdraw* and devote oneself to the familiar, close environment.

The greatest source of inspiration for **Gerald Lovell** (*1992 in Chicago; lives and works in New York) is his personal relationships with friends and family. His paintings are mostly based on photographs that he either took himself or found in his grandmother's photo albums. These are portraits, interiors and everyday scenes in moments of impartiality, «transition moments» as Lovell calls them. The dynamic application of paint speaks of passion and movement: gently vibrating flatness contrasts with sculpturally spackled colour density, reminiscent of the Impasto technique of Post-Impressionism. In the work *Pandemic Photoshoot with Andy 2020, 2022* (121 x 91.5 cm, see invitation card), the tactile texture of the face contrasts with the shimmering foliage in the background. Despite the rough duct, the warm shades of mahogany, ochre or copper brown are very carefully layered to capture all facets of the subject in all their beauty. It is an interplay with the surface, in which not the black skin is the focus, but rather the intimate affinity between the artist and the subject. This special intimacy can also be found in Lovell's new series of very personal interiors, such as *Rosie, 2022* (152.5 x 120 cm), which centres on the electric guitar of a friend of the artist that is standing in her New York apartment. Every object and detail in the painting, such as the grain in the parquet floor or the ornaments in the frame of the oval mirror, were closely observed and transferred into the artist's own pictorial language.

Lovell self-taught himself his characteristic painting style at the age of 22. His work has since been presented in solo and group exhibitions across the US, including at PPOW, New York (2021); Moore Building, Miami (2021); Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture, Charlotte (2020); Houston Museum of African American Culture, Houston (2019) and the Hammonds House Museum, Atlanta (2015).

The paintings of **Simon Martin** (*1992 in Vitry-sur-Seine, France; lives and works in Paris) are dominated by bright colours on a gently flowing surface. The subjects are distinguished by tranquillity and melancholy, showing friends in quiet interaction or alone, immersed in their own thoughts. The works capture moments of idleness that convey to the viewer a positive, intangible energy of deceleration, as in the work *Christopher et Julien (jour), 2022* (114 x 195 cm), which shows two young men lying on the floor in a relaxed pose. The background, which is not further defined, leaves open whether they are outside or inside. Nor does it matter, because only the moment counts. While one of the two is looking at his smartphone, the other is lost in admiring contemplation of his counterpart. A bond of tenderness seems to connect the two. The poetry of the scene is carried by the soft palette of gentle blues and greens, which acts like a calming filter on the precise contours of

the protagonists. Golden yellow hues reflect the light with a luminosity reminiscent of the Nabis and other Post-Impressionists.

Martin graduated from the Ecole nationale supérieure des Beaux-arts de Paris in 2017. Since 2014, his work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions in Paris and New York, including Galerie Jousse Entreprise, Paris (2020); La Collection Agnès b., La Fab. Paris (2020); Galerie MONTEVERITA, Paris (2019); espace TAJAN, Paris (2019); Musée des Beaux-arts de Paris, Paris (2018) and L'Inlassable Museum Paris (2016) and New York (2015).

For **Kenrick McFarlane** (*1990 in Chicago; lives and works in Los Angeles), the act of painting is a meditative moment. When he enters his studio, it is important for him to put aside beforehand everyday worries. Instead, he lets himself be guided by thoughts, desires and emotions that inspire his visual language. His paintings are not the result of a composition planned in detail, but emerge as if by chance from the dynamic flow of painting. The path to the final subject is like a journey that surprises the artist himself each time: it can lead to a specific arrangement of figures in space or end in a wild overlapping of layers of paint. For the exhibition, McFarlane developed a new group of works in continuation of his last solo exhibition *Famous and Naked* at M+B in Los Angeles. The paintings depict male and female figures coming together in dreamlike sequences. In the work *Gregorian Chant* (182 x 152 cm), one can discern the curves of a reclining female body, whose form loses itself in abstraction in the upper part of the painting. A strong brushstroke merges into fine, flat surfaces. McFarlane speaks of a «psychological landscape» that was autobiographically inspired. At the same time, he takes up taboo themes, such as the intimate relationship between black men and white women. The subtle eroticism is not only reflected in the poses of the individual protagonists, but is also carried by a colour palette inspired by the distinctive red of Francis Bacon. The result is a pictorial world in which beauty and truth reside precisely because of their immediacy.

McFarlane is currently completing his Master of Fine Arts at the University of California in Los Angeles. His work has been shown in solo and group exhibitions in the US and South Africa since 2010. Most recently, he has had solo exhibitions at M+B Gallery, Los Angeles (2021) and Gallery MOMO in Johannesburg (2020). Group exhibitions have included Samek Art Museum, Bucknell (2018) and Expo Chicago (2012).

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