

Axel Geis*Grace, beauty, and seduction (with many modern details)***Opening:** August 6, 2021 6–9pm**Exhibition:** August 7 – September 4, 2021

The overarching theme in Axel Geis oeuvre is painting. Painting not only as a medium but primarily in the form of the technique, i.e., the application of wet colors by brush on a painting surface in all its possibilities. The artist is especially interested in the – almost unconscious – process of the genuinely painterly. The object of the painting itself, the subject, recedes behind this process. Nevertheless, it is primarily portraits and figures (and occasionally animals) on which the artist conducts his painterly studies. Although the depiction of people, in particular, seems to have been robbed of a large part of their individuality and does not represent portraits in the classical sense, the results are astonishingly diverse.

The artist often uses film stills as a source for his motifs. He does not proceed systematically in his choice of models but rather exclusively intuitively and "hopes for a productive coincidence" (Geis). One could almost say that the choices of concrete motifs are merely initial 'triggers' in which he sees the potential for a possible painterly realization. The respective 'motifs' are then stripped of their possible narrative context, both formally and in terms of content so that they no longer allow any conclusions to be drawn about their (cinematographic) origins.

Since the beginning of 2020, Geis has discovered the small format of the postcard for himself. Very often, small-format works serve artists as a kind of limited playing field on which pictorial ideas and or compositions are tried out in the form of sketches. The small-format paintings shown in the exhibition *Grace, beauty and seduction (with many modern details)* are quite different, though. All in postcard format, they are condensed painterly solutions that could not easily be transferred to larger formats. Although some motifs also exist in large formats, they are to be considered independently and formally lead to different 'solutions' inscribed with the individual format-related peculiarities. The effect of the color on the small surface and their transparencies are in the foreground. Although the motifs here are also mainly limited to the depiction of people, the 'figures' seem even more removed from their 'models' due to the small format. In the process, the figures' pictorial spaces take on equal importance compared to the motifs. The dissolution of the motif through a sketchy or transparent ductus is reflected in the background surfaces, which are sometimes broken up, occasionally transparent, and often painted over several times.

Axel Geis not only accepts the limitations of the format but surrenders to them to the last detail to explore painting and its possibilities in a highly concentrated form.

WENTRUP

Grace, Beauty and Seduction (with many modern details) is the sixth solo exhibition of the Berlin-based artist, who was born in Limburg an der Lahn in 1970.

Geis had solo shows at the Kunstverein Dillingen; the Kunsthalle Mannheim; Weißfrauen Diakoniekirche, Frankfurt and at Grzegorzki Shows, Berlin (all Germany) and gallery shows with Wentrup in Berlin, Germany; Mitchell-Innes & Nash in New York, USA; Galerie Almine Rech in Paris, France; Baton Gallery in Seoul, South Korea and Avlskarl Gallery in Copenhagen, Denmark.

He has participated in numerous international group exhibitions in venues such as Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin; Stadtgalerie Kiel; Haus am Lützowplatz, Berlin; Me Collectors Room, Berlin (all Germany); Portland Art Museum, Portland; LCC Kunstraum, New York (both USA); Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Tel Aviv Museum, Tel Aviv, Israel and The National Museum of Art, Bucharest, Romania.

His works are part of the collection of the Centre Pompidou in Paris; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; Florence et Daniel Guerlain, Paris (all France); Kunsthalle Mannheim; Saarland Museum in Saarbrücken; Collection of Jil Sander (all Germany) and the Rubell Family Collection, Miami, USA among others.