

Axel Geis

Kult und Amore

Opening: Saturday, 1 July 2023, 4 – 8 pm

Exhibition: 1 July – 2 September 2023

Wentrup Gallery presents "Kult und Amore," the seventh solo exhibition by Berlin-based artist Axel Geis. In his latest paintings, the human figure takes center stage. Geis does not use a systematic approach to selecting motifs, instead appearing to choose them randomly, without consideration of their artistic or film-historical value. The figures in his works do not make direct eye contact with the viewer and do not seem to seek interaction. Rather, they remain closed off and look through the viewer with dark eyes into emptiness. Their faces are often shaded and appear contourless due to the lack of clear outlines, offering no possibility for identification. No active actions are recognizable, as the figures are in the center of a free, monochrome surface charged with vitality solely by the traces of brush movement. This reinforces the role of the individual in contemporary painting.

Geis's paintings are characterized by extraordinary intimacy and a competent representation of the human psyche. He avoids idealization and instead creates honest and profound images. His loose brushstroke technique captures an atmosphere of spontaneity and movement. The current works are produced in poppy, rich colors, which strongly contrast with older works in earthy tones. The painterly style in his work is reminiscent of portrait paintings by Manet, Goya, or Velazquez.

However, what Geis depicts in his works is not necessarily important. Instead, it is how he presents his thoughts. The current works evoke memories of long-forgotten summers, which return to us in pictures again and again. He always works on the basis of reproductions, generally based on photographs from the family environment or self-staged shots. In addition, film stills usually serve as the starting point for his works. In the current exhibition, the artist showcases motifs he has found and archived on Instagram.

Axel Geis was born in 1970 in Limburg an der Lahn, DE. He lives and works in Berlin.

Geis had solo shows at the Kunstverein Dillingen, DE | Kunsthalle Mannheim, DE | Weißfrauen Diakoniekirche, Frankfurt, DE | Grzegorzki Shows, Berlin, DE | Kunstverein Trier, DE | Galerie RX,

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Paris, FR | Slag Gallery, New York, US | Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York, US | Galerie Almine Rech in Paris, FR | Baton Gallery in Seoul, KR | Avlskarl Gallery, Copenhagen, DK.

He has participated in numerous international group exhibitions in venues such as: Villa Schöningen, Potsdam, DE | Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, DE | Stadtgalerie Kiel, DE | Haus am Lützowplatz, Berlin, DE | Me Collectors Room, Berlin, DE | Portland Art Museum, US | LCC Kunstraum, New York, US | Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR | Tel Aviv Museum, IL | The National Museum of Art, Bucharest, RO.

His works are part of the collection of the Centre Pompidou in Paris, FR | Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, FR | Florence et Daniel Guerlain, Paris, FR | Kunsthalle Mannheim, DE | Saarland Museum, Saarbrücken, DE | Sammlung zeitgenössischer Kunst der Bundesrepublik Deutschland | Collection of Jil Sander, DE | Rubell Family Collection, Miami, US.