

Florian Meisenberg

„Um, nice guy, good hospitality, but.. y'know.. I-I- I don't think he knows how to turn on a computer. (brief pause) So... but th-the good thing is he's filling the void.. uh, with coverage in [REDACTED] at the moment so y'know they're-they're not drowning.“

Opening: 09 September 2016, 6 – 9 pm

Exhibition: 10 September – 19 October 2016

Florian Meisenberg's paintings often function as membranes or portals. His canvases and videos are thresholds between analog worldliness on the one hand, and conduits that facilitate transmission and exchange of the here and now through virtual simulations on the other. In his third solo exhibition with WENTRUP, Meisenberg shows new works on canvas, in film, and a site specific installation of several projections generated by a specifically written software program.

His new series of canvases show motifs that have evolved continuously in his work: the grid, periodic broken lines, which appear as optical guides or cones of light, and the white color bars as limitations of picture within picture. A red-bearded man with pipe emerges, for example, and is reminiscent of Van Gogh's self-portrait. In another, there is an oval area in vigorous blues and reds with wild strokes dashing about, which is similar to the Fauves. For Meisenberg, these allusions are not only picture within picture, but also allude to floating copy and paste modules, split screen moments, and computer presentation programs like PREZI. Recently, though, Meisenberg's canvases have become shaped object themselves, similar to the images depicted on them. A water droplet, a Tondo, an eye, and an arch - thematically he underlines vision and the act of passing below, the cognitive recognition and the physical movement of the analog to the virtual. The simulation is announced in the stretcher shape even before entry is granted to the image itself. At last, Meisenberg links here to the central problems of illusion and pictorial space, and negotiates the role of painting under the auspices of an omnipresence of virtual space.

These canvases are set against a half-hour, single channel video that uses documentary-like material of the activity at a tennis court. In long close-up shots the uniformity of the white clothing stands out against the brittle green lawn, as do the movements of the protagonists, who move

unusually slow. All of the players seem exceptionally old. Having a difficult time swinging and running, the exclusively male performers often run as if in slow motion behind the ball. Beige arthritis support stockings stand out from suntanned legs, and big bellies sit on thin legs. Meisenberg sets a transcription of a concealed recorded telephone conversation upon these images in white letters. The text gives the words of a young banker on his way from New Jersey to Wall Street. As if on a teleprompter, the text flows as series of claims - for efficiency, profit maximization and mobility - over the images of aged bodies that can no longer keep pace with their own personal expectations.

For the third group of works in the exhibition, Meisenberg casts into the space a two-channel projection. A continuously renewed digital handwriting is generated by a program that Meisenberg developed together with NY based programmer Tommy Martinez, using an algorithm which utilizes text files directly from the from the WikiLeaks website. The handwriting forms an Arabesque of white lines, which condenses as semantic information that reveals confidential material like personal emails from Hillary Clinton. In doing so, it looks like Meisenberg has signed the floor of the exhibition, while in fact the writing comes from an anonymous program.

In Meisenberg's exhibition *„Um, nice guy, good hospitality, but.. y'know.. I-I- I don't think he knows how to turn on a computer. (brief pause) So... but th-the good thing is he's filling the void.. uh, with coverage in [REDACTED] at the moment so y'know they're-they're not drowning.“* the thematic connection of reality and simulation is key to Meisenberg's work. In this context, the motif of the tennis match has a haunting precursor in film history. Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow Up* ends with a fictional match played by mimes. In the moment when we as spectators see the eyes of the protagonist move and hear the sound of an invisible ball, the simulated tennis match suddenly becomes real. Although we ourselves cannot see it, mirroring becomes the tool for seeing the simulation of reality.

Florian Meisenberg was born in 1980 in Berlin. After his studies at the Dusseldorf Art Academy with Peter Doig, he moved to New York.

Meisenberg has had numerous exhibitions in international institutions such as the Goethe Institut Hong Kong; Kunstpalais Erlangen, Erlangen; The New Museum, New York; Kassel Kunstverein Kassel; Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf; Bundeskunsthalle Bonn, Bonn; Ludwig Forum in Aachen, the Wilhelm Hack Museum in Ludwigshafen, in den Kunstwerken Berlin, Berlin; at the Queens Museum of Art, New York and the Museum Kunsten Aalborg (Denmark).

Recently his installation, *"Out Of Office"*, was prominently featured at the Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt.

In 2017 two new sitespecific installations by Meisenberg will be presented at the ICA - Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia and the Henie Onstad Kunstsenter in Oslo.

Works by Florian Meisenberg are represented in public and private collections, such as the Philara Collection, Düsseldorf; Boros Collection, Berlin; Zabudowicz Collection, London; Vanhaerents Art Collection, Belgium; Collection Stadtparkasse Düsseldorf, Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf; Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen; The Pizzuti Collection, Columbus; Collection Osram, Munich; Kunsthalle Recklinghausen, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles and Julia Stoschek Collection, Düsseldorf.

Florian Meisenberg has won numerous awards, including the Art Prize Junger Westen, Arbeitsstipendium der Stiftung Kunstfond Bonn; DAAD scholarship in New York, the NRW sponsorship and the Audi Art Award.