

Mary Ramsden*In touch***Eröffnung:** 14. Juni 2025, 17 – 21 Uhr**Ausstellung:** 14. Juni – 9. August 2025

The artist's studio is a place not only cloaked in myth but also strictly guarded by bouncers who will not hesitate to kick you out if it's getting too crowded in there. Sometimes artist, bouncer and viewer happen to be the same person, with comical effects worthy of Baron Münchhausen, who famously pulled himself out of the mud by his own hair. Let me remind you of Philip Guston's often-quoted version of such self-referential gymnastics:

»When you're in the studio painting, there are a lot of people in there with you – your teachers, friends, painters from history, critics ... and one by one, if you're really painting, they walk out. And if you're really painting YOU walk out.«

What gets easily lost when summoning the cliché of the (often male) reclusive bouncer-painter is the triadic topology invoked in Guston's quote. All the people in the room can only walk out because the studio is not a walled bunker or a cave in the desert, but a room with a door. The difference, to put it with Georg Simmel, is that »the wall ist mute, but the door speaks. « The door creates »a hinge between the space of man and all that lies outside of it, it overcomes this separation between inside and outside.« The door connects because it separates.

Who or what is it exactly that has to leave the studio? Mary Ramsden describes the process of painting as »connecting with everything you have learned without intellectualising it in the process, almost like a muscle memory or learned sensibility. «Painting means to stay in touch with what you know without naming it, an eloquent aphasia that holds a semantic space open while feeling for ... for what? For something wild that changes behaviour when observed and disappears when speared by reference. Bewilderment as »a form of lostness and unknowing« (Jack Halberstam) is not the opposite of knowledge, rather a suspension of knowledge and belief. The once carefully drawn line between ontology (what is) and epistemology (what we know) gets smudged in the process.

Eventually it is the paintings that leave the studio (and now I am glad to have added the studio door to the topology of creation, because doors make art handling so much easier). Even after having settled into a new context after the murky ontological status of artworks in transit, that Ramsden compares to that of Schrödinger's cat, the line between ontology and epistemology can only ever be partially re-drawn. The urge to attach words to what we observe will change the thing right in front of our eyes. What does this mean for the viewer? Maybe this: If reception is production then it is our turn to stay in touch with everything we have learned while flexing our sensorial muscles to keep that semantic space open.

Marie von Heyl