

Matthias Bitzer

Sequences from a Volatile Now

Apr 17 — May 19, 2018 | London

Almine Rech Gallery is pleased to announce *Sequences from a Volatile Now*, Matthias Bitzer's first solo exhibition in London. The exhibition consists of a series of new sculptural and wall works, which Bitzer conceives as a cohesive installation of disparate pieces.

Employing a characteristic simultaneity of figurative elements and abstract forms, Bitzer continues his exploration of history and identity in muted paint on canvas, monochrome paint on wood, and metal sculpture. Bitzer constantly engages a range of material that challenges his thinking and drives his practice. The large-scale paintings in *Sequences from a Volatile Now* dissolve, however, explicit reference to historical figures. Distinct from the investigation of specific literary characters like Brecht or Pessoa who appeared in previous bodies of work, the visages in *Sequences from a Volatile Now* are unimpeded by fixed identity, time or space. Splicing and refracting these alluring faces with shapes and lines, Bitzer begins to direct his attention to the present.

Describing a volatile present in the exhibition title, Bitzer nods to contemporary politics, but also frees the phrase from any constraining connotation. In *The Time Traveller*, for instance, an auratic face gazes into the distance, while the shapes that emerge from the canvas offer a portal that is at once a window, a shadow or a reflection. *the dilemma of relativity*, his first mobile, and *the third investigator*, offer a troublingly precise precariousness. Bitzer envelopes the ideas of past thinkers in the exhibition, particularly attentive to ruminations on what it means to be a meaningful contributor to society at different periods in time. Weaving concepts from Thoreau's 'Civil Disobedience', Marcus Aurelius' 'Meditations' and Elias Canetti's 'Mass and Power' throughout his installation, Bitzer grapples with the potential for meaning-making in the present day.

Bitzer's work is anchored by the vast intellectual touchpoints that inform his practice. Sources as diverse as Schrödinger's cat (a quantum physics thought experiment) and Perec's rumination on writing in 'Species of Spaces', for instance, seep into the works. The body of work bears an intimate kinship with poetry, as the likes of Walt Whitman and Goethe were also influential as Bitzer made these works. Whitman's stature as a channeller poet who aims to express, but not contain his contemporaries in 'Song of Myself', for instance, is also similar to the way in which the figures in this exhibition act as vessels. Bitzer's shapes and figures offer the viewer a window into what it could mean to contain an ever-changing present.

Matthias Bitzer (b. 1975, Stuttgart) has exhibited in numerous exhibitions regionally and internationally. Notable solo institutional exhibitions include 'KNOCK / KNOCK / NEPOMUK', Kunstverien Hechingen, Hechingen, Germany (2016); 'Disintegration of the properties', K21 Standëhaus, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany (July 2014-July 2015); 'King Rat', Project Arts Centre, Dublin, Ireland (2010); and 'Palimpsest', Kunstverein Hannover, Germany (2010). Group exhibitions include 'Luce 01', Palazzo Mongiò dell'Elefante della Torre, Galatina, Italy (2015); 'Zeichen. Sprache. Bilder - Schrift in der Kunst seit den 1960er Jahren', Städtische Galerie Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe, Germany (2013-2014); 'Galerie Utopia / The Forgotten Bar project: The Garden of Eden', Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2012); and 'What You(ngs) See Is What You Get', Rosenblum Collection, Paris, France (2011). His work is represented, among others, in the collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California, and Rosenblum Collection & Friends, Paris. Matthias Bitzer lives and works in Berlin.