

Colour without title

Galerie Albrecht is opening its new space on Bleibtreustraße 48 on Savignyplatz with two artists from Cologne, Michael Toenges and Peter Tollens. Just as the former West Berlin is becoming again more attractive, Cologne, once the leader of the German art market before it was replaced by Berlin, is now again playing a more important role.

Michael Toenges (*1952) studied at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, and Peter Tollens (*1954) studied at FHS Köln. Both artists were art students in the early 1980s, when Cologne had its heyday as a centre of art: a time when Konrad Fischer and Michael Werner, Rudolf Zwirner and Alfred Schmela opened their galleries, and Joseph Beuys taught at the academy in Düsseldorf. And they witnessed the decline: when everybody was looking to Berlin, and galleries moved to the capital. They stayed and learned equanimity.

Their paintings usually don't have titles. Events play at most an indirect part. The art market comes and goes, rises and declines, that may affect the artists, but it doesn't have anything to do with the paintings. They are completed on a certain day (Michael Toenges) or are the result of successively applied paints (Peter Tollens); the path to completion or the decision in which order the paints should be applied may have been difficult, but what counts is only the result: the calm after the struggle, harmony after chaos. But the creation of the paintings was not as calm and objective as the archival titles (*20-17-32-28* / Michael Toenges, *pariser-preussen blau* / Peter Tollens) may suggest.

Peter Tollens' supports are usually made of wood, he uses oil paints applied with a brush. The order of the paints varies, as does which colour is on the surface in the end: red, gray, black, yellow, orange... The colour on the paintings' surface is in the end not the result of the succession of paints, but rather the memory of a moment in nature or at another place that is associated with that colour. The repetitive work process liberates the artists' thinking and can be disassociated from real action. The application of the paint leads to a cycle of memories and emotions that are captured in the painting. And the brushstrokes prescribe a variable rhythm – the work can be compared to a piece of music: colours rather than sounds succeed one another rhythmically. The painting *orange was the colour of the dress then blue silk*, named after a piece by the jazz musician Charles Mingus, names the source of inspiration.

Michael Toenges' supports are either canvas or paper, he uses oil paints, which he applies in a pastose fashion with a brush and very rarely with his hands. The paintings are finished once they've found a sound. When all the brushstrokes, executed freely and without a plan, come together and find peace. They visualise the creative, the origin of the world, the tutti of the orchestra: when chaos becomes order, when many voices come together to form a unit. Harmony is fragile, and the path to reaching it can be long and difficult. Michael Toenges never knows whether he will find it again. He works like a high-wire dancer without a safety net.

Galerie Albrecht is pleased to present these two extraordinary artists in Berlin.

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Poster - Peter Tollens *_left_* #12 Kreisel II, may - september 2017, oil on linen, 31 x 29 cm *_right_* #10 orange was the color of her dress then blue silk, september - november 2017, oil-wax-dammar glaze, 180 x 160 cm
Reverse - Michael Toenges, *20-17-32-28*, 2017, oil on wood, 32 x 28 cm

MICHAEL TOENGENS
PETER TOLLENS

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January 26 - March 3, 2018

Opening January 26, 7pm



