

G E O R G K A R G L B O X

Press release

Jaromír Novotný

What A Painting Wants

Exhibition duration: 9 September – 5 November 2016

The show What A Painting Wants by the young Czech painter Jaromír Novotný is his first solo exhibition at Georg Kargl BOX, however not the first time his works are shown at the gallery. Several pieces of his series using synthetic organza were included in the group exhibition TRANSPARENCY at Georg Kargl Fine Arts in 2015. Now at the BOX, the artist shows three works from 2016 from the same series on an even lighter tone. On the question of what a painting wants, the artist's statement below gives an insight of a possible answer:

A painting is something artificial, yet even so it is naturally self-evident to the highest possible degree. As if it originated by itself, without any effort on my part. This peculiar detachment provokes my curiosity and engagement. Even given the enticing notion that "aural depictions of the past often consist of objects produced in such a way that they are not in fact 'the work of human hands'"¹, I maintain an awareness of the painting as a thing, an object that is "manufactured". Working within certain rigidly defined guidelines and the consideration and acceptance of random processes together form a single whole. At the same time I consider verticality (of format, composition) and a scale of 1:1 (human figure: painting) to be constant parameters of a certain "basic (default) setting" with respect to the perceiving viewer. On this background, the paintings "reveal" their essential properties, whose values reach slightly above zero, i.e. cross over the boundary of visibility. These include a limited range of colours which seem to arise from white only, as well as the depiction of the surface of the painting, which appears to be only just detaching itself from the surface of the canvas, as if it were some kind of initial "motif" of painting itself, appearing almost to blend both with the surface and the format of the painting-object. The process outlined is not necessarily unidirectional – it may concern extinction as well as creation. Withdrawal / advancement. In any case, however, at stake is movement within a narrowly delimited "phase" of minimal visible transformations (of colour scheme, composition) which also give rise to an important "functional" aspect of these paintings consisting of making the medium of painting visible. A minimal mutual differentiation seems to be a general and basic process here, on the backdrop of which it is possible to materialise – or at the very least point to – certain variables of time and space and in particular their resultant phenomenon – a place. Standing in front of a painting, I sense the existence of here and now with the awareness, however, that "Now is the inner image of the Past."²

¹ Georges Didi-Huberman, *Devant le Temps / Before Time*

² „das Jetzt das Innerste Bild des Gewesenen“, Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk / Arcades Project*

Jaromír Novotný, born 1974 in Český Brod, Czechoslovakia, lives and works in Prague. His works were presented in solo shows at Georg Kargl BOX (2016), Geukens & De Vil, Antwerp (2016), The Gdańsk City Gallery, Gdańsk (2015), Art Basel Miami Beach/Positions, solo with hunt kastner (2015), Art Brussels, solo with Geukens & De Vil (2015), Bílý nástěnka, Školská 28 Communication Space, Prague (2014), k.art.on, Karlin studios, Prague (2014), Galerie Na shledanou, Volyně (2013), City Gallery Prague (2012), Kolumba (Kunstmuseum des Erzbistums Köln), Raum 10, Cologne (2012), Galerie SPZ, Prague (2011), Geukens & De Vil, Knokke (2011), Jiri Svestka Berlin (2010), Jiri Svestka Gallery, Prague (2009), Geukens & De Vil, Antwerp (2009), Jiří Jílek Gallery, Šumperk (2008), Dole Gallery, Ostrava (2008), Felix Jenewein Municipal Gallery, Kutná Hora (2007), Via Art Gallery, Prague (2004).

Selected bibliography

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Marek Pokorný, Kapradinový květ / Fern Flower, catalogue for the exhibition of Michał Budny and Jaromír Novotný, PLATO, Ostrava, 2015, cz+en

Petr Vaňous, Jaromír Novotný, Vyklízím místo náhodě / Leaving Room for Chance, Fotograf #21, Prague 2013

Stefan Kraus, Das Wesentliche der Malerei betrifft das Unsagbare. Überlegungen zu den Werken von Jaromir Novotny, Kunst und Kirche 1/2013

Karel Srp, Viditelné formáty / Visible Formats, solo exhibition catalogue, City Gallery Prague, 2012

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