

Anton Kern Gallery

Ellen Gronemeyer: Tausendmal Du

November 3 - December 18, 2021

For Immediate Release

For her second exhibition at Anton Kern Gallery, Berlin-based artist Ellen Gronemeyer chose nineteen paintings: sparkling, densely painted, with turbulent surfaces, dark yet luminous compositions. Their motifs have slowly grown out of layers of heavy paint, and the viewer can discern not just shapes and figures but also fields of crusty paint that have become just as alive as the paintings' protagonists. The paint itself has taken on an active role in these narratives. Areas of restless brush strokes and craggy paint skin set the paintings' mood. Byzantium purple, golden yellow, teal, and black; canary yellow, dark orange, sky blue, and black; hot pink, electric blue, turquoise, fuchsia, and black. The viewer feels immersed in the sounds of an imaginary color organ. Black strikes the keynote and sets the rhythmic structure, secondary and tertiary colors build the harmonic system, tints with white create space, movement, and speed.

The new paintings redirect the metamorphic energy of her previous work, the focus having shifted from interaction between protagonists to depictions of single figures: a dog, a reclining youth, a snake, a drinker, a mermaid (or is it a merman?), a melting ice cube, and a couple of close-up faces. The figures seem still, pensive, sometimes melancholic, at any rate content and in unison with their slightly shadowy environment. Perhaps the mermaid seems a bit at odds with its awkward position in the painting, her horizontally outstretched body balancing on the cusp of an enormous wave of deep dark paint.

The question of transformation lies at the core of Gronemeyer's work. Obviously, transformation is what painting can do: mess with the rules of nature, create unlikely scenarios. The artist seems to suggest something more, however: that these changes are possible, that they can be observed in real life, or at least nearly witnessed, glimpsed at for just a second. The surprise and shock of these paintings result not just from the improbability of their scenarios or the artist's vocabulary of metaphors, but from the way they are made. Paint and brushstrokes merge into the figures, and figures dissolve into flickering surface patterns. Figure and ground seem barely separated — occasionally by a soft back light.

A bouncy red creature appears at the very bottom of a large, almost entirely figure-less painting. It stares with friendly enthusiasm at a disembodied toothy mouth beyond a wall of paint-flames into a vast, dark shimmering surface of paint, a space of seemingly endless associations. A dark-chocolate-colored dog, gently back-lit, stares attentively right past the viewer. At first glance the animal seems awkwardly situated, but within the logic of Gronemeyer's paintings, it comfortably settles into a ground of orange, green, and pink paint. The dog seems so convincingly at home in the painterly color-space



Ellen Gronemeyer, *flabbergasted*, 2021
Oil on canvas
63 x 55 1/8 inches (160 x 140 cm)

that the viewer starts to read that space as natural and plausible.

Herein lies Gronemeyer's magic. It is her ability to transform metaphor into paint, so that the physical works themselves become the protagonists in her world of open possibilities. An illogical world for sure, but one where seriousness and profundity are contained in the interplay between the artist's cast of characters and her color-trembles and humming, gnarly brush marks — a world in which the original, biological meaning of metamorphosis, i.e. the transformation from an immature stage to an adult stage, is played out and, most astonishingly, suspended for a time and even reversed. A liberating act.

For additional images and information, please contact: press@antonkerngallery.com.

Gronemeyer studied at HfbK University of Fine Arts in Hamburg. She taught at Goldsmiths College and Chelsea College of Art in London. Since 2017, she has been teaching at the Art Academy in Düsseldorf. Her work has been presented in solo exhibitions in galleries throughout Europe as well as in New York and Chicago and was included in groups shows at Kunstverein Harburg (2019), Museum Ludwig Forum Aachen (2016), Kunsthalle Bern (2015), ICA London (2014), Kunstwerke Berlin (2013), Portikus Frankfurt, and Deichtorhallen Hamburg (both 2011). Currently her work is included in the exhibition *Andante Remix*, at LinseedArt Projects, Shanghai. Gronemeyer lives in Berlin, Germany.

On the occasion of this exhibition, a new monograph entitled *Ellen Gronemeyer: Tausendmal Du* will be published by Bierke publishing in Berlin, including essays by Vanessa Müller, Daniela Dröscher and Christoph Gerozissis.

Gallery Hours

Tuesday through Saturday
10am – 6pm

Press Inquiries

press@antonkerngallery.com

General Inquiries

info@antonkerngallery.com