

THOMAS HUBER

here and now / hier en nu



Here and now, 2017, oil on linen, 100x140 cm, photo: Winfried Matejka

Although Thomas Huber's work has always revealed an obvious concern with the origin of the work of art (the creative process) and its final display (in a museum or gallery), the focus in his exhibition *here and now / hier en nu* at AKINCI is directed to the moment when the paintings have just left his studio.

In 1992, Huber exhibited a pair of paintings in the Kunsthall in Rotterdam. It was the first time that Huber concentrated purely on the display of the picture. In Studio I one could see a table, a few benches and the backside of a painting on an easel. Huber approached the painting from the rear, a vantage point he had not yet used before. After these two works, more emphasis was placed on the notion of the 'pictorial space'. Following Huber's thought, a picture is not an object but a place. A place can be seen. So, it is the artist's job to open a pictorial space and expose it to the spectator's view. The fact that the paintings are open on the spectator's side means that the spectator can enter the picture. According to Huber, the painting is not a surface but a boundary, a dividing-line between appearance and reality. Of course, something changes once you cross the line. In that instance, the painting exchanges reality for a different kind of reality — a reality that cannot be translated into something present, but one whose existence lies in its appearance. Appearance and dream are connected according to Huber. Paintings are generally asleep. Huber believes that it is not what is visible in the painting that is interesting, but what evades perception.

In *here and now / hier en nu*, Thomas Huber is presenting works from two series. On view at AKINCI will be a monumental painting and gouaches from the project 'Das Meer' ('The Sea'). In 'Das Meer', we look upon the surface of a wooden floor, in which we immediately recognize the elegant nerves of the cherry tree. There is a small red bucket spilling water on the floor. As this perception triggers more layers of a narrative, we discover that there is depth in the surface of the floor and that there is a reflection to be observed in the water, caused by windows placed high up in the ceiling. We, the spectator, seem to enter the space at this very moment, during the act of the red bucket spilling water, contrary to the second series of paintings in which time seems to be frozen. Here, present, past, and future cannot be traced, but only understood through a text as 'the painting has been collected yesterday'; or by the three blue bulky figures which have just entered through a door and stand there with suitcases in their hands carrying the words 'here', 'and', 'now' on their protruding bellies.

Thomas Huber is the master of time and creates the notion that the exhibition space, or his own studio, provides timeless moments in which something is, inevitably, going to happen.

Thomas Huber (1955, Zürich, Switzerland) works and lives in Berlin. Recent solo shows are: 'vis-à-vis', Art UNLIMITED Basel 2017; Collection display MONA, Tasmania (2017); 'éxtase', Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris (2017); 'Am Horizont' Kunstmuseum Bonn / Musée des Beaux Arts Rennes (2016); Collection display Museum Boijmans van Beuningen (2013); 'VOUS ÊTES ICI, THOMAS HUBER EST AU MAMCO' (You are Here. Thomas Huber is in Mamco) at Mamco, Geneva (2011/12); exhibition tour 'Rauten traurig' ('Rhombuses sad') at MARTa Herford, Germany (2008), Carré d'art at Musée d'art Contemporain de Nîmes, and Kunsthalle Tübingen; Retrospective 'Kabinett der Bilder' ('Cabinet of Paintings') in the Aargauer Kunsthhaus in Aarau, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, and the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum and Haus Lange in Krefeld (2004). Previous shows by Thomas Huber in the Netherlands: 'Der Duft des Geldes' in the Centraal Museum, Utrecht, in 1992, 'Studio I & II', Kunsthall Rotterdam in 1992 and 'Boeken/Books' in the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, in 1991.