

Thomas Erben Gallery



V-Park, 2011. Oil on canvas, 200 x 190 cm

Marcus Weber

Adalbertstraße, Crazy Kat und Artforum-Leser

April 5 - May 19, 2018

Opening reception: Thursday, April 5, 6-8:30pm

Thomas Erben Gallery is pleased to present the first U.S. solo exhibition of Berlin-based painter, Marcus Weber. Last seen in New York at the Sanya Kantarovsky curated group show, *Sputterances*, at Metro Pictures (Spring 2017), this presentation collects paintings from Weber's *Adalbertstraße*, *Krazy Kat*, and *Artforum-Leser* series (among others). Comprising work from the past ten years, the show is a bracing introduction to Weber's poppy, comic, and off-kilter geometric approach to abstraction, figuration, and social observation.

Following his studies at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (1984-92), Weber quickly established a singular aesthetic. Ironic and unromantic, yet also lively, absurdist, and wry, Weber reflects a generation of Germans who came of age navigating the first wave of the internet's unlimited flood of images.

Though Weber's art has consistently foregrounded formal considerations, over the years his subject matter has increasingly revealed the artist to be an astute cultural observer - including of the immigrant Kreuzberg neighborhood outside his studio on

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Adalbertstraße in Berlin. The paintings from this series - *V-Park* (2011), *F-Park (Caparol)* (2012), and others - are populated with the familiar touchstones of Kreuzberg: bbqs, squirrels, dog owners out for a walk, women in hijabs out for a stroll or sitting on park benches.

By contrast, the figures in Weber's *Krazy Kat* series are stylistically simplified, their heads reduced to spheres, their stick-figure bodies rendered as three-dimensional geometric abstractions. *KWEE MOKKS* (2018) shows four golf ball-headed sitters reading *Krazy Kat* (1913-1944), George Herriman's avant-garde celebrated comic strip that married self-reflexivity, absurd narration, and surreal stagings with a modernist sensibility - reflecting many of Weber's own interests.

The selection of the works in the exhibition allows the visitor to see how - over time - Weber has both synthesized and alternated between abstraction and comic figuration and between referring to content and generating it.

Weber's *Artforum-Leser* series proceeds to demonstrate an arch synthesis. In *BEST OF 2013* (2014), the titular high-culture magazine is read by comic figures sitting on toilets in an abstractly patterned, yet spatially suggestive environment. In an absurdist stroke, the toilets' drainage drifts off in random paths, functioning both as plumbing as well as formal elements which further define the pictorial space.

Well-known in Germany, where his paintings and sculptures have been widely exhibited - including in an exhibition of the private collection of Kasper König at Galerie Thomas Fischer, Berlin (2018); Kunstwerke, Berlin (2013); and Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal (2008) - Weber's body of work has not yet received the same amount of attention outside of Europe. Striving to broaden Marcus Weber's audience, Thomas Erben Gallery is thrilled to present this exciting artist for the first time in the United States.

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