

Thomas Erben Gallery



Clockwise from top left: Mira Schor, Jason Eberspeaker, Horst Ademeit, Kahlil Robert Irving

are you dead, yet?

Horst Ademeit, Jason Eberspeaker,
Kahlil Robert Irving, Mira Schor

January 11 - ~~February 17, 2018~~ **Extended to February 18**
Opening reception: Thursday, January 11, 6 - 8:30 pm

Thomas Erben Gallery is pleased to present *are you dead, yet?*, a group exhibition of artists whose work fervently apprehends the world as a domain of powerful, intransigent, often fickle forces that threaten to destabilize our collective and individual economic, environmental, political and spiritual equilibriums. Encompassing painting, sculpture and photography, *are you dead, yet?* reveals Horst Ademeit, Jason Eberspeaker, Kahlil Robert Irving and Mira Schor to be nevertheless united by a resonant approach to art, all of them stirred into action by an irrepressible awareness that life is complex and needs to be confronted. Incorporating, embracing or absorbing the realities of our fraught contemporary moment, the works by these artists reflect the urgencies of living in a fateful, precarious time.

Working in a variety of materials (e.g. porcelain, glass and stoneware), the sculptural works of **Kahlil Robert Irving** (b. 1992, San Diego, CA) invoke a host of references, resulting in visually as well as metaphorically richly layered pieces. Visceral and rhythmic, Irving's assemblages and other sculptures consist of a variety of textures, colors and dimensions. In several works he compiles imagery and references ranging from 20th century decorative arts traditions (touches of Meissen pottery) to contemporary urban culture (newspaper clippings of the 2014 killing of Michael Brown). Fusing these popular and autobiographical, rarefied and quotidian elements, Irving's work produces a reflection on the experience of living in America's cities today.

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Horst Ademeit (b. 1937, Cologne, Germany; d. 2010, Düsseldorf, Germany) meticulously documented the noxious influence of cold rays, an invisible form of radiation that he believed was constantly assaulting him and the environment. Using photography (Polaroids and, later on, digital photos) and measuring instruments of his own creation, Ademeit developed a complex documentation system of cold rays' influences—in effect, an archive of their existential corruption. The Polaroids are like diary entries of the day-to-day impact of the rays, the white edges crowded with his voluminous notes recording their magnitude and effect as well as the date and his description of the day. On display will be examples from two series the artist had pursued for more than forty years: his daily "Tagesfotos" and "Observationsfotos."

Summoning worlds of inscrutable forms situated in visionary realms, **Jason Eberspeaker's** (b. 1980, Grand Rapids, MI) paintings convey a state of eldritch in-betweenness. These small-scale oil paintings have absorbed a range of historical antecedents, culminating in works that fluctuate between observation and imagination, land- and mind-scapes, abstraction and a state of becoming. Drawing upon societal trends towards obfuscation, collective paranoia, extremism and fast-casual fringe conspiracy, the works are visually tumultuous while exuding an air of stillness, as in the case of *Untitled* (2017), which veers between an abstract scene of smooth strokes of browns and grays and an inchoate landscape of stone and soil that echoes throughout the sky.

Repudiating the either/or approach, **Mira Schor's** (b. 1950, New York City, NY) art embraces political activism, critical research and painterly richness. Richly spare, her recent work in painting balances hard-edged realities with a satirical grace, recognizing the humor in the political, the philosophical in the everyday. In *For Once...* (2014), an offhandedly-sketched box inquires—perhaps of the viewer—"are you dead?" This question and the seeming response of a prone stick figure—"For once I find myself in total control of my destiny"—are drawn from email scams Schor has received. Always trawling for language that has multiple meanings and applicability, "are you dead?" perhaps begs a question about power relations (as the figure appears half-buried), whereas the response can be seen as potentially ironic, Quixotic or even heroic. Lean and sartrean, appearances are not what they may seem.

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