

KÜNSTLERHAUS BETHANIEN

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Berlin, 15th May 2017

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to invite you to the opening of the following exhibitions:

RICCARDO BENASSI

Sleep'n'Spleen

OFIR DOR

Woman with a Mirror, Man with a Camera

ELIZABETH HOAK-DOERING

psychopomp

DANIEL M THURAU

It's Only Rock'N'Roll

(But They Will Play It At Mc Donald's)

Joint opening: WEDNESDAY, 24TH MAY 2017, FROM 7 PM
Showroom at Kottbusser Straße 10

Exhibitions: 25TH MAY – 18TH JUNE 2017
Tuesday – Sunday, 14 – 19h

Finissage event: Elizabeth Hoak-Doering and Riccardo Benassi
SUNDAY, 18TH JUNE 2017, 14 – 19H

ATELIERS UND BÜROS: Kohlfurter Straße 41-43 · 10999 Berlin · SCHAURAUM: Kottbusser Straße 10

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RECHTSFORM: Künstlerhaus Bethanien GmbH · SITZ: Berlin · AG Charlottenburg

GESCHÄFTSFÜHRUNG: Christoph Tannert · Andrea Boche · HANDELSREGISTER: HRG 8089

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RICCARDO BENASSI

Frequently collaborating with others, visual artist Riccardo Benassi has been one of the most interesting agitators of the European underground music scene. Benassi's works are the result of an articulated assemblage of images, sounds, colors, texts, design objects, and diverse materials, which are put together to generate large-scale installations, videos, performances, artist's books, and sculptural elements in which the visual part is one of the many elements that compose the final result. Riccardo Benassi reflects on the impact of technology in our daily relation to space, and how technological devices have radically altered the structures for living and organizing the real, from architecture to politics and cultural production and consumption. For example, with the ongoing project titled *Phonemenology* – Riccardo Benassi is researching how the daily use of smartphones could affect the role of the human body as interface within a constructed environment (as much as the the role of a subject as interface within a Democratic State).

With *Sleep'n'Spleen* Riccardo Benassi will be presenting two different environments on the two levels of the exhibition space. The gallery entrance space will be inhabited by five stretched banners from the series *Every quote is a note, please reply*, originally conceived for the shopping window of Museo Ferragamo in Florence for the show *Across Art and Fashion* (2016). This set up will recall the original in creating a direct communication with the passers-by outside of the building. The upper space will be a site-specific environment and composed by four different text works, an acousmatic sound installation, take-away stickers scattered on the floor, a special wall clock and an outdoor banner.

With *Sleep'n'Spleen* Riccardo Benassi focuses on the possibility for a piece of art of acting as a whispered suggestion, a direct yet impartial advice that – despite the minimal set up – intends to address the entirety of our human condition.

RICCARDO BENASSI *1982, grew up in Cremona, Italy and currently lives and works in Berlin.

Benassi's works have been shown, among other venues, at ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany; Museion, Bolzano, Italy; VeneKlasen/Werner, Berlin ; MAXXI, Roma; Macro, Roma; MAMbo, Bologna; Museo Marino Marini, Firenze; Museo Salvatore Ferragamo, Firenze, Italy; Deutsche Bank Kunsthalle, Berlin; PAC, Milano, Italy; NCCA, Moscow, Russia; OCAT, Shanghai, China. In 2016, he was a grantee of Artisti per Frescobaldi, Firenze at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien. | More: www.365loops.com

OFIR DOR

The paintings on shown in *Woman with a Mirror, Man with a Camera* were executed between 2016–2017 and feature couples in erotic situations rendered through a language where symbolism, the esoteric and art history intermingle – an inexhaustible source to Dor for ideas and inspiration. The mostly nude couples are located in the domestic setting of a bedroom or hotel room, or yet in some fantasized Arcadian nature.

Equipped with ocular props such as a camera or mirror, they engage in a sex play of gazes and self-display, which to the outside viewer – taking the position of a voyeur – seems naively awkward. They indulge in their nudity, posing for themselves and their partner as they try out different positions and revel in their image as reflected or gazed upon through a window, peephole or camera. In their knowing game of appearances and the uninhibited thrill of the gaze, the male and female participants bring to mind a topic from art history – that of the artist and his model, which Dor tackles with a contemporary twist.

The nude male and female figures seem trapped in a magnetic field of attraction, of conflicting powers of push and pull. Dor employs a multitude of layers as he explores his subject matter, aiming towards a free and intuited painterly flow to express his candid and playful themes. With the body as the focal point of his work, the sensuality of the line brings out the liveliness of the flesh and a nearly childish exhilaration, together with a certain inadequacy and embarrassment. The freeform expression, as evident in the

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paintings, sensitizes the viewer and alerts them to the deeply sensorial realm of the body, the personal and interpersonal.

OFIR DOR *1972 in Israel, lives and works in Berlin. He studied Visual Arts at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design and at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel (MFA 2004).

Recent exhibitions include *Sing While You're Burning*, Circle 1 Galerie, Berlin (2017, ge), *GirlyGirlyGirlGirl*, Circle 1 Galerie, Berlin (2015, se); *Don't Shoot The Painter. Paintings from the UBS art Collection*, Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Milano, Mailand, Italien (2015 ge); *Mr. O and Mrs. I*, Sommer Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv, Israel (2011, se); *Wild Exaggeration: The Grotesque Body in Contemporary Art*, Haifa Museum of Art, Haifa, Israel (2009, ge). | More: www.ofirdor.com

ELIZABETH HOAK-DOERING

Elizabeth Hoak-Doering's current artistic practice adopts and transforms signs and inscriptions of a past *condition humaine*. As an anthropologist, Hoak-Doering is particularly interested in historical sites of changes of political identities or individual lives. Some years ago she began her work with ancient forms of graffiti by making rubbings of ships that were, for several centuries, scratched into the wall of an abandoned church on Cyprus. The outlines of the different ships, which she transposed directly onto rice paper using the frottage technique, were for this exhibition transferred onto an etching plate covered in light-sensitive film; in their re-printing they join to create an abstract 'fleet', a poetic sea of masts and sails (*Mothership*, 2017).

Hoak-Doering's Berlin works are devoted primarily to the recent past, traces of which she has been offered abundantly in Berlin. In Gesundbrunnen she explored the texts and drawings scratched into the air-raid bunker there as thoroughly as the signatures and messages from prisoners in the cells of the Stasi prison, Hohenschönhausen. Hoak-Doering did not copy, re-draw or photograph the inscriptions – which have often survived only in fragments or have been painted over in places – with any documentary intention: instead, she took the signs, engravings and inscriptions from their background by tracing and frottage, using this in turn as a pattern for a re-enactment of the unknown writers' gestures and a focus on the surface as a transmitting medium. The direct 'copies' were left for the memorial site's archives.

In her exhibition *psychopomp* – which takes its title from its 'key' piece, a cylinder seal following antique clay models but made of glass and designed by the artist – she also shows a 4-channel video installation, in which various phases of an apparently uneventful car journey westwards can be seen. The work can be understood against the background of knowing that the road is the Baltic Coast motorway A20, constructed after the fall of the Wall. For the road's foundations, large amounts of rubble were gleaned from the former Berlin Wall: a subtle reference by the artist to the transitory nature of existing conditions and an insight that objects often exist longer, in a different form and bearing a different surface, than the ideas and political concepts which produced them.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an artist's book, *Oniritti*, with a text by Knut Ebeling.

ELIZABETH HOAK DOERING *1966 in Philadelphia, USA, lives and works in Nicosia, Cyprus. She studied anthropology at Amherst College (USA) and art at Boston University (MFA in sculpture). She represented the Republic of Cyprus in the 54th Venice Biennale of Art; other recent venues include Manege, Moscow; the Drawing Center, New York; Lisson Gallery, London. | More information and writing: www.hoak-doering.com Elizabeth Hoak-Doering is in receipt of a grant from **UNDO Contemporary Arts** and the Department of Culture of the **Ministry for Education and Culture of the Republic of Cyprus**.

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DANIEL M THURAU

It's Only Rock'N'Roll (But They Will Play It At McDonald's): "the title of the exhibition is a paraphrase of the Rolling Stones song by the same name, which occurred to me during one of my rare meals in the aforementioned fast food restaurant. It illustrates – not without self-irony – the generally large gap between aspiration and reality, wish and being, and imagined and actual ability. If you want your work to be effective at all, its distribution is essential. In the Reformation year, we can learn that very well from Luther. But once a painting has left the studio, you quickly lose control of its interpretation, and what recently seemed subversive is suddenly pop music, and vice versa. You can go as far as the Stones and change a line or even the entire concept for television and Ed Sullivan – or remain stubborn like The Doors, for whom the cameras weren't switched on, at least at first. There is no known medicine against the appropriation and false interpretation of work by one's own disciples, the industry and big money, unless of course you decide to disappear again into insignificance. The paintings in this exhibition represent an attempt to work over things that seem unavoidable to me, without denying myself, although listing them proves almost embarrassing these days. The beauty of nature with its endless supply of colour and forms, coupled with our vain efforts to find a comfortable place in the world, serve as my excuse and the trigger behind the work; giving content to a contemporary form of painting in the hope that ultimately, a painting will come into the world, which has a present power. Its effects and outcomes, however, are beyond my future control." (Daniel M Thureau)

DANIEL M THURAU *1974 in Köthen/ Anhalt, lives and works in Berlin. He studied law in Halle/ Saale and drawing at Norwich University of the Arts, Norwich/ UK, as well as painting under Werner Büttner and Jutta Koether at the HFBK Hamburg. Recent solo exhibitions include *Pfuscher, Stümper, Amateur*, Katharina Maria Raab Galerie , Berlin (2016); *Utopia Now*, Altstadt Vienna/ Galerie Lang , Vienna (2016); *Utopia Now*, Feinkunst Krüger, Hamburg (2016); *But We Have Giants*, Bar Babette, Berlin (2015); *Color is Visions Amphetamine*, Mint Gallery, Dunedin, New Zealand (2014); *Fresh Fruits*, Kai Hilgemann Projects, Berlin (2014).| More: www.eiland.org