

Megan Francis Sullivan

Slow

15 May – 27 June 2009

Opening Thursday, 14 May, 5pm

Megan Francis Sullivan (* 1975, in Connecticut, USA, lives in Berlin) who's works were presented at Freymond-Guth in a group show last year, emphasises in her paintings, sculptures and publication projects the representation of socially coded contexts, since 2005 mainly on the male subject.

The artist herself describes this relationship as incongruous: on one hand she acts from sincere interest to approach the male subject in its visual aesthetic as well as a sociological and historic figure. On the other hand Sullivan remains in fundamental distance to the illustrated subjects. They originate from a different time (as the David Kennedy works shown at the gallery last year) or are part of a specific social environment. The explicit representation of the male in art history has often been connoted with a homoerotic perspective, which the artist appropriates in a so-to-say conceptual detour. Through this the male subject becomes a metaphor for an artistic discrepancy, an "irresolvable ambiguity" as the French literature critic and writer Maurice Blanchot once said.

After a long period of black and white paintings and collages, the latest works are in color. The "Slow" series draws on formal themes, such as plane and abstraction, pose and gesture, variation and repetition, posture and fashion. The color of the watercolor and gouache works follow formal studies of Sophie Taeuber-Arp or Ellsworth Kelly, which are remarkable in their clear, rhythmicized methods. At the same time, the movements and poses of the "Slow" series are inspired by the music video of the same name by Kylie Minogue from 2003, in which numerous, sun-bathing men sprawl tantalisingly around the singer.

As in almost all paintings by Megan Francis Sullivan, photographs form the basis for her works. Here, image sources were created through a photoshoot with male fashion models and a precise selection and choreography of accessories and poses. This strict procedural method is reflected in the works: they seem distant and observant, in which the male subject, through pose, color and styling, results in an anonymous element of visual investigation. Any sexual tension becomes almost irrelevant through the cautious handling of sexual virility and powerful physiques, as well as the painted lightness in which the young men are presented.

Even less are Sullivan's works to be read as intimate portraits: any direct eye contact is missing, the models are spread vulnerably under the eyes of the viewers, themselves only variations of a lyrical and scrupulously analytic inspection.

In connection to her exhibition, Megan Francis Sullivan has put together a group show in the small exhibition space titled ,The 3 F's', relating to the terms "form, fashion, fate". It shows six contemporary and historic positions that emphasise issues of visual representation, desire, and context. Since the 1950s, painter and feminist Sylvia Sleigh has become known for her opulent, detailed, and intimate portraits of men and women in an attempt to assert a pluralist, conciliatory view of the world, while Cary Kwok creates intensely detailed, fine-line drawings of men and women contorted with ejaculate.

Diego Fernandez gregariously redirects aesthetics and codes in art and media systems, while Zille Homma Hamid, both in her works with the artist collective Honey Suckle Company and as fashion designer, adjusts a material sensibility. The photo-based work of Lucie Stahl confronts discrepancies of vision, information, and surface. The celebrated fashion photographer YVA (Else Neuländer-Simon, 1900- 1942), headed a flourishing studio in the 1920's and 30's in Berlin, including fashion spreads in the lifestyle magazine ,Die Dame', before the teacher of Helmut Newton became tragic victim to the political regime.

For further informationen and images please contact the gallery:

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Megan Francis Sullivan studied at the Cooper Union, NY, Städelschule Frankfurt, DE and Jan van Eyck Academy Maastricht, NL.

Her works have been presented a.o. in the following exhibitions and institutions: Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, DE (g, 2009), The John Institute, St. Gallen, CH (g, 2008), Broadway 1602, New York, US (s, 2007 & 2006), After the Butcher Contemporary Art, Berlin, D (s, 2007), Galerie Meerrettich, Berlin (s, 2004), Artnews Projects, Berlin, D (g, 2008), Anna Helwing Gallery, Los Angeles, US (g, 2007), Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne, D (g, 2006)