

Albert Oehlen

Schweinekubismus

Potsdamer Straße 77-87, 10785 Berlin

14 September – 2 November 2024

Opening: Saturday, 14 September, 6 – 8pm

Galerie Max Hetzler is pleased to announce *Schweinekubismus*, a solo exhibition of new works by **Albert Oehlen**, at Potsdamer Straße 77-87, in Berlin.

Known for his exploration of the means and methods of art, Albert Oehlen often applies self-imposed formal constraints to critically examine the history and conventions of contemporary art, whilst giving himself something to paint against. He combines expressive gesture with a surrealist attitude, overriding the search for constant forms and meanings.

In his paintings, Oehlen takes up details and isolated themes from existing groups of works, including the tree motif which has fascinated the artist as a form and system since the early 1980s, the 'John Graham Remixes' (1997–ongoing), the 'u.b.B.' paintings (2020–2022), and the 'Ömega Man' series (2021–ongoing). This marks an inward-facing shift in Oehlen's practice as his paintings become self-referential. Here, the act of transferring the images into a new state is of greater importance than the source material. There is no separation between abstraction and figuration, improvisation and control; there are only the endless possibilities of the medium.

The majority of the paintings are rendered with a grid-like structure, giving the works the appearance of mosaic pictures. The fragmentation within the images varies: some of the grid-patterns are more regular, while others vary in size and shape. This interruption of the surface provides a reference to the title of the exhibition, which translates to 'Pig Cubism'. By breaking up the pictorial motif, the Cubists created a way of coding human space in the context of its radical flattening. A group of four large *Untitled* paintings can be seen as a particularly pronounced form of this structured fragmentation. Reworking the same source in different distortions, the paintings encompass the self-imposed constraints within which the artist operates.

Four shaped canvases alongside a further painting continue the artist's 'Ömega Man' series, initiated in 2021. The paintings deploy the Ω (omega) symbol as a recurring motif which Oehlen submits to ongoing graphic distortions. The last letter of the Greek alphabet, omega is written here with an umlaut: phonetically emulating the artist's name, the paintings thus refer to the artist himself, whilst also referencing the fictional survivor of a global pandemic from Boris Sagal's 1971 dystopian film, *The Omega Man*. The repetition of the genderless humanoid form also evokes a Cubist way of image-making, recalling the cut-outs and collages from Picasso's compositions of the 1910–



Albert Oehlen, *Ömega-Man (shaped C.2)*, 2021
Photo: def image

1920s. The 'Ömega Man' can thus be seen as a double agent in his function as an abstracting figure or as a figure used in the service of abstraction, whilst also providing a pictorial anchor, at once making and unmaking the painting.

The aluminium sculptures on view are imbued with the appearance of hybrid creatures, incorporating similar shapes to those seen in the paintings. The vocabulary of Oehlen's celebrated 'Baumbilder' (Tree Paintings) and 'Ömega Man' works here translates into the three-dimensional with seeming ease and readability. The artist also intervenes into the preexisting gallery space, where a curved wall has been constructed. Behind it, a yellow wall references the initial presentation of Oehlen's early 'Ömega Man' paintings at Reena Spaulings gallery in Los Angeles in 2022. Looking for trouble through productive systems of resistance, Oehlen continues to create chaos in paint, expanding the future of the medium.

Albert Oehlen (b. 1954, Krefeld), lives and works in Switzerland. He has been exhibiting regularly at Galerie Max Hetzler since 1981. Oehlen's work has been the subject of numerous exhibitions in international institutions, including Espace Louis Vuitton, Beijing (2024); Friedrichs Foundation, Weidingen (2023); Sprengel Museum Hannover (duo show with Carroll Dunham, 2020); Serpentine Gallery, London (2019–2020); Aishti Foundation, Beirut (2018–2019); Palazzo Grassi, Venice (2018–2019); Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana (2017); The Cleveland Museum of Art; Guggenheim, Bilbao (both 2016); New Museum, New York (2015); Kunsthalle Zürich (2015); Museum Wiesbaden (2014); mumok, Vienna (2013); Kunstmuseum Bonn (2012); Carré d'Art de Nîmes (2011); Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris (2009); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2006); Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami (2005); Kunsthalle Nürnberg (2005); Musée Cantonal Des Beaux Arts, Lausanne (2004); Domus Artium 2002, Salamanca (2004); and Secession, Vienna (2004).

Albert Oehlen's works are in the collections of The Broad, Los Angeles; Centre Pompidou, Paris; The Cleveland Museum of Art; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Valencia; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Mudam, Luxembourg; Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain Strasbourg; Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris; Museum Brandhorst, Munich; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main; Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden; and Tate, London, among others.

Albert Oehlen's institutional solo exhibition *Computerbilder* is on view at Hamburger Kunsthalle from 13 September 2024 until 2 March 2025.

Further exhibitions and events

Berlin:

7 September – 26 October 2024

Friedrich Kunath

One Day I'll Follow The Byrds (Tutto Pasta)

Goethestraße 2/3, 10623

7 September – 26 October 2024

Danielle Mckinney

Haven

Bleibtreustraße 45 & 15/16, 10623

Paris:

7 September – 5 October 2024

Rinus Van de Velde

46 & 57, rue du Temple, 75004

London:

29 August – 28 September 2024

Grace Weaver

Flowers

41 Dover Street, W1S 4NS

Marfa:

9 May – 8 December 2024

Katharina Grosse

The Super Eight

1976 Antelope Hills Road

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