

MARCO MEIRAN: GLIMPSE

KLARA WALLNER GALERIE, BERLIN
2 MAY - 21 JUNE

The latest show at Berlin's Klara Wallner presents a selection of recent works by the young German painter Marco Meiran. Wallner has acquired a deserved reputation as champion and patron of some

of the strongest young artists in Germany, and Meiran is no exception. Far from the confines of those stalemate discourses that have so surrounded painting for the past few decades – endlessly pronouncing on its death and inevitable resurrection – Meiran's approach to the medium is genuinely liberated and refreshing. Starting from a mixture of sources, including images from magazines, Meiran makes composite drawings which are covered in painterly patterns. In his most recent works, this covering is done straight onto the magazine page in black felt-tip ink, framing and marking the mass-media collages, and built up with layers of coloured graphics. This lively mixture of clean reproductions and hand-drawn scribbles provides the basis for his larger canvases, which, painted in oil, have a crisper, more even surface. Here the pairs have been hung together, revealing the process and conceptual rationale behind the work.

In *Interieur, Exterieur* (2008) one finds a strong architectural edge unseen in abstract constructions like his double-canvas *Polymic Games* (2008), which has a much less defined spatial field. Other works are anthropomorphic, such as *Jay Doubleyou* (2008), in which faces and hands emerge amid the abstraction. Meiran paints as if he has invented a curious and charismatic new formal language; a scripture of geometric shapes that emerge, overlap and repeat. You might be inclined to frame his paintings in the formal language of Constructivism, De Stijl or Suprematism, but this would be too easy. Meiran's works just as clearly chart the imaginary, subjective and aesthetic forms, landscapes and palettes born of the 1990s. His canvases reference low-fi indie music, mobile phones, graffiti and the silliness of lifestyle brands as much as they function as historical reappraisals of past abstractions.

Meiran's recourse to the mannerisms of Modernism gives a depth to his work which serves to remind us that we no longer have a contemporary vocabulary to accommodate abstraction. This is one of the interesting tensions that abound in his paintings – their part-modern, yet very current abstraction frustrates clichéd symbolic or hermeneutic exegesis. The playful titles given to his works, such as *Gonz* (2007), *Ovalation* (2008) and *I don't think we should tell them* (2008) suggest a knowing and subversive aesthetic intent. More than the functional formalism of the Bauhaus, Meiran's paintings play games with shapes and their meanings in a manner that echoes Michel Foucault, who once wrote that as soon as the gazing subject begins to read, 'shape dissipates. All around the recognised world and the comprehended sentence, the other graphisms take flight.' Meiran paints just this – the unfurling of meaning despite and after appearances. For this reason his work contributes more valuably, and certainly more imaginatively, than many present practitioners to the questions surrounding painting's contemporary condition and its ruses of representation. *Sarah James*



Polymic Games, 2008,
oil on canvas,
210 x 340 cm.
Courtesy Klara Wallner
Galerie, Berlin