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ROMA 2017/4: Exhibition Text

„...It is just this relationship between indulgence in the material and the ontological, and the need for responsibility and critical objectivity, that defines the arena of painting.“

Dan Walsh, in: Recycling, Christophe Cherix ed. (Cabinet des estampes Genève/JRP Editions, 2002) p. 27.

For his first solo exhibition in the gallery in Rome, Nick Oberthaler invited the artist Nico Vascellari to become his counterpart. Both of them share an interest in certain ambiguities regarding the use/amalgamate of material and content, the mapping of space and its transformation into new significance, but then, also a dialogue about painting (in and within space) and its (potential) thresholds.

By using pure pigment and binder, applied with a brush on the walls and re-structuring the yet still fresh white cube of the gallery, Nick Oberthaler creates a setting within the existing boundaries of the space, to render possible a new consideration: a staging without a stage. Within this "painted box", he installs three new paintings, which on one side refer to the early arrow paintings of french conceptual painter Martin Barré (Untitled/Witness the Change #2 and #3, both acrylics on canvas, 2017) and then again (Untitled/VdS3, acrylics on canvas, 2017) where the floorplan of the gallery space turns into a casual abstract composition in the vein of the Cercle et Carré movement. Context converts into content, whereas the painted walls and architectural elements of the gallery space might recall Giorgio de Chirico's metaphysical staged arrangements: the inside confronting the outside.

Nick Oberthaler (*1981, lives and works in Vienna) recently held solo exhibitions at Martin van Zomeren, Amsterdam (2017), Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zurich and Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna (both 2016) aswell as Bianca d'Alessandro, Copenhagen and Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris (2015). Groupshows include the Villa Médici, Rome (2016, Cur. Pier Paolo Pancotto), Institut d'Art Contemporain Villeurbanne/FRAC Rhône-Alpes (Cur. Marie de Brugerolle, 2015) and Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2012, Cur. Francesco Stocchi). His work is part of private and public collections like 21er Haus/Belvedere Vienna, Landesgalerie Linz and the Caldic Collection/Museum Voorlinden Rotterdam.

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Nico Vascellari Ghost Series, 2017 Paper, tape,
smartphones, steel

The ghosts are conjunctions between worlds. The alive and the dead. Inside and outside. Private and public. Gallery and street. In the intimacy of silence I can hear voices talking to me.

Nico Vascellari (*1976 in Vittorio Veneto) recently had solo shows at the Palais de Tokyo Paris (2017), Villa Médici Rome (2016), Whitworth Art Gallery Manchester (2016), Estorick Collection London (2016) and Museion Bolzano (2010). He participated in numerous group shows in institutions like the Villa Médici Rome, ZKM Karlsruhe, the Beyeler Foundation, La Casa Encendida Madrid, Museion Bolzano, Museo Maxxi Rome, MACRO Rome and participated at the Biennale di Venezia (2007) and Manifesta/European Biennial of Contemporary Art (2008). His work is part of numerous private and public collections including Whitworth Art Gallery Manchester, Museo Maxxi Rome, MACRO Rome, Museion Bolzano, the Julia Stoschek Collection Düsseldorf and MUSAC Léon.