

# JACKY STRENZ

Kurt-Schumacher-Str. 2 60311 FRANKFURT am MAIN

**ADRIAN SAUER  
FRANK VON LENBACH  
MARKUS EBNER**

Alte Meister / Old Masters

April 22 – June 26, 2016

If artists for centuries copied works of their famous predecessors, this was intended to approach the prefiguration by adapting. Or equipping the established composition or pictorial figure with ones own “Maniera”, ones own individual style. In postmodernism suddenly the climate towards copying had changed. Appropriating a work or a style often was intended as an attack on the original, as the view had changed from the mastery of a famous work through a criticism on its instrumentalization and commercialization or a genius minded art historiography.

The exhibition “Old Masters” presents three different aspects of appropriation – beyond former ideological trench wars. By 19<sup>th</sup> century Munich “painter prince” Franz von Lenbach, who often used photographic models for his large portraits, a small-format version of a copy of a painting by van Dyck, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna is shown. Lenbach sketches the prestigious pose of young Prince Rupprecht of Palatinate, loosing distinction caused by the quick brushstroke. Additional to his portraits Franz von Lenbach also was known for Old Master copies equipping famous collections such as the collections Schack and Montgelas. Young Paul Klee enthused during a visit to the Villa Lenbach 1901 about “the wonderful copies on the walls”.

On the contrary, large size works by Adrian Sauer pursue a philological approach. They are based on two black and white photographs by Walter Peterhans, head of the workshop for photography at the Bauhaus Dessau. These documentary images of interiors and furniture are “reconstructed” by the artists in digital processing, gradually replacing the original photography and providing a colored surface based on descriptions of that time. But more than a faithful reconstruction of the retained scenery these images are autonomous works, which as conscious contemporary interpretations with today’s techniques precisely for this reason pay reference in a particular way to the important Bauhaus images.

„Orgelpunkt“ by Markus Ebner perhaps illustrates the most radical appropriation among these copies and interpretations. Since almost 10 years the artist dedicates himself to key works by Günter Fruhtrunk copying them meticulously. Markus Ebner studied under Günter Fruhtrunk at the Münchner Kunstakademie during last years of the great constructive artist. To him the “new edition” of the work by the “old master” signifies the confession to an absolute modernity and topicality of this painting style. With extreme accuracy Ebner delves into Fruhtrunks world of images, which in conventional conception and in an era of total availability of images actually copies are without need. Even more his pictorial work is an outstanding practiced passion on painting.

Therefore the various engagements with the “Old Masters” in this exhibition is, not unlike as in Thomas Bernhard’s novel, a rejection of innovation logics of the current establishment, and furthermore a request visualizing latent potential of works by adaption or putting up for discussion.

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