



Backyard Comedy

Dragutin Banic

14. August – 25. September 2021

We are delighted to announce Dragutin Banic's third exhibition with the gallery. The paintings of the show *Backyard Comedy* belong to a series of works entitled *Untitled (watering can)* that repeat an iconic composition. With constantly changing color rhythms and a variety of painting techniques, Banic creates free spaces in the given pattern. In its simplicity, the pattern evokes a modern tradition that was convinced it could convert serially created spaces into an open and free form using color. In these spaces, which sought to newly define a human scale, emptiness was brought to the fore. At the edges of the free surfaces, the urban space is condensed. Narrower, disk-shaped blocks frame an enclosed backyard—time and again, the same floor plan and the same exit offer themselves. Through the choice of a classical format, the pictures become abstract portrayals. Their color tones evoke emotions, in many works, the palette is cheerful and warm. The interior body appears enveloped in a salvaging way by the narrow cuboids. But there are also compositions that bear great tension, with the exterior forms seeming to beset the interior space. For the paintings in this vein are repeatedly overpainted, almost black.

Banic's works are *mindboards* of liberation in the process of painting, which alongside the more variegated works are always present in the studio, even if at times only as an image, as an icon on the wall or hanging from a nail. Two years ago, the artist resumed working on this series which he began in 2010 while studying under Walter Dahn—they have since assumed a central position in his painterly oeuvre.

Iconic objects, such as empty clothes hangers, filled garbage bags, car tires, or metal pipes, repeatedly appear in Banic's work. In the 2021 sculpture *Mülleimer und Kleiderbügel (Backyard Comedy)*, a small ceramic seems to flow into a carefully carpentered bar table. The soft shapes of the ceramic are blurred reflected by the table's white lacquered surface. A melted clothes hanger lies behind a wall fragment. A scene that the viewer can immediately continue to narrate, especially here in the gallery, whose surroundings were long characterized by empty lots next to densely built spaces. The scenes in Banic's sculptures are cinematic, the works appear as stills. They tell of what is no longer or not yet there. Was a shirt hanging on the now melted hanger a short while ago? What is absent, what is already missing, comes to the fore, when one starts describing the charged objects in Banic's work. There is a protected room, in which one can rest, but that had once been dangerous and stinky. The pieces express a longing, cheerful attitude recalling a modern idyll that was destroyed by the war but prevails all the same.

A publication with a text by Marietta Franke is published on the occasion of this exhibition.

Dragutin Banic (*1979) lives and works in Cologne. From 2006 until 2012 he studied at HBK Braunschweig and graduated as master-class student with Prof. Walter Dahn. Exhibitions a.o. *Cornfeld*, Kommunale Galerie Berlin (2020), *Sculpturale Annuale*, Conzenhof, Cologne (2020), *Blanko*, theBank, Cologne (2019), 12. Westwand-light installation of Kunstraum Fuhrwerkswaage, Cologne (2017), *New Talents*, Kunsthaus NRW Kornelimünster in Aachen (2017) und Kunsthalle Recklinghausen (2016), *New Talents Biennale* in Cologne (2016).