

Kenneth Bergfeld *Fast Day Menu*

Project Native Informant is proud to present *Fast Day Menu*, Kenneth Bergfeld's second solo show at the gallery. The exhibition consists of seven new paintings of varying size that all feature the artist Svenja Wichmann. Originally, Bergfeld had intended to make a series of works depicting a variety of friends and acquaintances; however the intensity and openness of his conversations with Wichmann lead to her becoming the focus of the exhibition. Bergfeld compensated Wichmann for her time to come to the studio for 4-6 hour sessions once or twice a week over a six month period.

There is a long history between the artist and subject, fraught with power imbalances and exploitation. Bergfeld and Wichmann were acutely aware of this and sought to deconstruct and subvert the traditional notions of "artist" and "muse". Rather than prescribing certain poses, a specific scene or composition, Bergfeld was lead by the randomness of their interactions, resisting the desire to impose order. All of the paintings in the show have a different format, a conscious decision to avoid any reference to scalability, and to respect Wichmann's subjectivity.

"I let Svenja take a seat on the long sofa in the studio. While we begin each session by talking about everything that is happening in the world and with us, I wait. Like someone who fishes, I wait for the wild terrain of the moment. A gesture, a word, a gaze. I ask her if she'd feel comfortable holding a certain pose. I ask her how the pose makes her feel both physically and psychologically, and we move on from there. Other times, Svenja brings up suggestions and I listen. She suggests a certain T-shirt or a pose, because she wishes to co-construct her own image. Svenja opens the first session by asking me if I want to see the way she was lying while the doctors removed her thyroid cancer. I agree and for the first time I see a scar reaching across her neck. It is then that I realise she is exorcising something in the studio."

Alongside the paintings, Bergfeld has made a site-specific wall drawing that includes Wichmann's hand gestures and objects such as an empty plastic bottle, signifiers of the duration of the process and time spent together. The palette of the exhibition takes on the metaphorical weight of the rain and floods that have recently affected the Nord Rhein Westfallen region of Germany resulting in a body of work that is psychologically charged and reflects the full spectrum of emotions experienced between the two.