

NAGEL GALERIE DRAXLER

Hans-Jörg Mayer

Galerie Nagel Draxler
Weydingerstr. 2/4, 10178 Berlin

Opening: Friday, March 10, 2023, 6-9 pm
Exhibition: March 11 – April 15, 2023

PRESS RELEASE

The Mai-Mai eat the pigmy, the pigmy eat the monkey
The monkey has a gift that he is sending back to you
Look! Here come the missionary
With his smallpox and flu
Saving them savages with his Higgs Boson Blues
I'm driving my car down to Geneva
I'm driving my car down to Geneva
Oh let the damn day break
Rainy days always make me sad
Miley Cyrus floats in a swimming pool in Taluca Lake
And you're the best girl I ever had
Can't remember anything at all

(Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds - Higgs Boson Blues)

"There was this idea that if they discovered the Higgs Boson that it would negate the existence of God." (Nick Cave)

With the discovery of the Higgs boson, also known as the "God particle", at CERN in Geneva on July 4, 2012, the existence of what is probably the final piece of the standard model of particle physics was confirmed — but what comes next? This question is also being asked by Hans-Jörg Mayer. The world is fucked, and sometimes painting is too — should we just keep on going as before? There is no answer, even less an explanation, and most definitely no solution.

For over four decades, Mayer has created a body of work that easily gets by without clearly defining itself. The driving force is the inability (according to the artist himself) to know exactly what the ultimate goal is, because the quantum entanglement of social forces spins a web from which no one can really escape. Trapped in the dark matter of the echo chamber of our time, it is simply impossible to keep a rigid focus on just one single thing. And it is precisely from this heavy, sticky molasses that Mayer's painting develops, a painting that simply will not, can not, must not anything. It is exactly where the particles collide that his painting is directly tempted by sometimes smaller and sometimes larger impressions. He brings things onto the canvas without having to theorize, debate, or terminologize them beforehand, without all the eternal chatter. Less words, more action.

Thus, painting is created that does not carefully consider, weigh or develop a specific concept in order to retreat back into itself by drawing a logical reverse conclusion. Painting that

does not decide on a particular style, sometimes rough and coarse, then again velvety soft and delicate. It is pure painting, quite classical and yet absolutely against the system, infinitely free. Painting that always living with a finger on the pulse of the times in its exhibition history, but that sometimes no longer wants to feel it and stumbles almost dead, or half alive (that's in the eye of the beholder), across the canvas. Painting that dies to rise again: undead, half-dead, zombies, divine beings. Painting that fights itself, destroys itself, and yet in constant renewal does not give up and keeps going.

Fundamental interactions between subculture and mainstream, punk and pop flourish, creating and at the same time abolishing contexts: Kali, Lourdes, unshaved armpits, Shiva, Cern, Calvin Klein. It does not have to be explained, clarified, or idealized. Anything can happen, nothing has to, and something new, something unexpected is always established, even diving into the microcosm of a butterfly. And that is deeply authentic and timeless, until it may eventually disappear into a black hole in the universe.

- Denise Kokko

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Hans-Jörg Mayer (born in 1955 in Singen) lives and works in Berlin. This is his 13th solo exhibition with Galerie Nagel Draxler. His most recent exhibitions include "Frühschoppen mit Khari Johnson-Ricks & Hans-Jörg Mayer", Galerie Nagel Draxler, Munich (2022), "Sweet Distance - Bittere Maronen", nationalmuseum, Berlin (2018) and "Kristen Stewart", M. Le-Blanc, Chicago (2018). Mayer's works have been featured in numerous institutional exhibitions, including "Painting 2.0: Expression In the Information Age" (2015/16) at MuMoK in Vienna and the Museum Brandhorst in Munich, "Captain Pamphile - A Picture Novel In Pieces" (2011) at the Falckenberg Collection, Deichtorhallen in Hamburg, "Make Your Own Life: Artists In & Out of Cologne" (2007) at the Henry Art Gallery at the University of Washington, Seattle and at the Museum of Contemporary Art Miami, and "Made In Berlin" (2004) at Art Forum Berlin, Berlin. Additionally, Mayer's works have been the subject of numerous articles in national and international magazines, and are part of several public and private collections.