

Benjamin Bernt ,Circuit Split' 23.06. – 25.08.2023

Ready to have your imagination tickled? Picture this: Silhouettes of faces striking poses between ancient beauty and calligraphic brush. But what's that? There's gracefulness in their profiles, some sense of calm, a smile of wisdom beyond your modern stress.

Step into the world of Benjamin Bernt, where pictorial spaces become playgrounds of mischief and wonder. Bernt's paintings emerge as drawings on paper, light and immediate. But the works you see in front of you still bear a certain immediacy, as lines dominate the surface. If calligraphy is the concentration on the moment, it is also fleeting and sometimes irresistibly unbound.

Just as mystical traditions embrace the unity of opposites, Bernt's work playfully endorses the age-old dance of contrasting elements. It's like witnessing the most unexpected yet harmonious collaboration—Klee meets Picasso? Perhaps, if this means fusing opposed modern classics; if Paul's spirituality gets down with Pablo's pathos.

In *Scint* you can feel the heat, there is a photorealistic glow of light—is this a flicker in the desert or the sea? Is the figure a mirage, a mythical reptile? There's a sense of the archaic, a relic-like quality. Like cave paintings, this is earthy.

Nothing is painted over here, there's no second layer, yet the steps of production remain visible. Splashes of paint rush the canvas in *Eye Chant*; they give movement and transparency, they are textures of the tangible world. Rather than heavy layers, it is all permeable freshness. In their attitude, these works resemble the "visions" of Forrest Bess: they are vivid and personal.

This process needs spontaneity—to capture the moment, you only have one shot. In Greek mythology, *Kairos*—the spirit of opportunity—was depicted as a youth with a lock of hair dangling from his forehead: You couldn't grab him once he passed. Amidst our fast-paced lives, Bernt's artworks offer a moment of respite.

In *Scale Dewar*, there's a sense of dialogue and scientific knowledge—like a vessel, the head opens to wisdom. The composition is one of mirroring frames, resembling a window. Your eyes follow the line's narrative to the upper-left corner, and back to the face. You might wonder: What does the other half of the face look like?

Perhaps both the voice of geometric clarity and magical realism come together in Bernt's paintings: they are witnesses of classical modernism, but also mischievous departures from it.

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