

6/16 – 8/19/23

green sky, soft shoulder

Nicl Barbro, Rahel Pötsch

When an object that you always associated with a certain colour, suddenly appears in another, it can be disconcerting or a sign of crisis. ***green sky, soft shoulder*** evokes both: the need to pause, to interrupt a path, to look at something anew, or an acute disaster scenario, green nausea and accident.

The exhibition by Rahel Pötsch and Nicl Barbro at mauer builds a bridge between the practice of both artists exactly at the point where art transitions from the second to the third dimension. From painting into space, from space back into two-dimensionality, as the disappearance of the body, smashed against the guard rail or overrun by the dynamics of art.

Painting is in itself a bodily practice, every touch of the brush / finger / spatula on the surface of a painting leads back to the artist's body as a reference or inscription of a movement. But when bodies themselves become a pictorial surface, a spatial pictorial surface in which they stand, we become witnesses of another process with two "*painters in a blank room*": In Rahel Pötsch's video "*pink to paper to yellow or green*" (2022), each colour makes its appearance, is announced as if it (and not the painters) were the protagonist in a play. And in fact the painting people disappear behind forms from the middle of the film on: Colour and shapes take over in stop motion autonomously the movement in the space and mark and constantly reinterpret it in the process. The *painters* have disappeared, and the space has long since ceased to be *blank*.

Nicl Barbro's half-reliefs, mainly carved in wood, also deal with the disappearance of the body, but here rather as a state of catastrophe: knocked out on the ladder (bad timing) or a match that has mingled dangerously between the towers of a skyline. A recurring element in Barbro's recent works are the two pieces of wood running towards each other - cones of light or an aligned road - as a quotation on Mary Heilmann's "*no passing*." The hand stretching out from the tattered shirt looks delicate and lifeless, the scene makes one think of a car accident, broken glass, two eyeballs.

The encounter of the two artists goes on a collision course with the body. In the end it is gone, when for centuries it was the most important thing in creating art: exhausted, worn out, overrun. K.O.

Text: Rebekka Seubert

mauer, Gereonswall 110, 50670 Cologne, Germany