

Harris Lieberman is delighted to announce the New York solo debut of German artist Matthias Dornfeld. Dornfeld previously participated in Painted Objects, a 2007 group exhibition at the gallery.

Dornfeld channels Expressionist techniques into oversaturated, densely layered paintings in oil, acrylic, tempera and gouache. Scores of lines, washes, and matte forms coalesce as energetic, visually intense images that toe the threshold of representation and abstraction. Vases sprout swarms of red and purple marks that loosely illustrate floral bouquets, and portraits buzz with crisscrossing colors. Linear structures lend an organization to the painterly excess, while the pulsating tones in turn soften their graphic edges. The oppositions that traditionally characterized academic painting assume unexpected, symbiotic relationships in these works.

While this gestural immediacy relates to Dornfeld's interest in honesty, directness and transparency, the complexity of his compositions – and sheer accumulation of layers of paint – reveal a slower, deliberate side to his work. In discussion, Dornfeld has highlighted the importance of this tension, as well as its reliance on the cliché. Images of still lifes, figures, houses and churches facilitate access to the intricacies of his paintings, while also reflexively operating in a larger meditation on genre. In this framework, vases and faces come to operate as ornaments and masks – visual surrogates that could easily suggest a cynical take on the contemporary state of painting, yet here prove to be surprisingly resilient. Indeed, the expressive quality of Dornfeld's paintings extends from a highly personal visual language, neither wholly beholden to analytical or intuitive strains of image-making.

Matthias Dornfeld was born in 1960 in Esslingen, Germany. He studied at Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Munich. Dornfeld's work has been shown in group exhibitions at Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna; Kunstbunker, Nuremberg; BallhausOST, Berlin; Kunststiftung Poll, Berlin; and Stadt Esslingen am Neckar, Esslingen. He has had solo exhibitions at Ancient & Modern, London; Galerie Ben Kaufmann, Berlin; and Rowley Kennerk Gallery, Chicago.

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