

“So colour is basically about history. To animate colour is historic in the way that the image will tell us about the future and the past.” Andre Butzer

Alison Jacques Gallery is delighted to present an exhibition of new work by acclaimed German painter Andre Butzer. Dominated by four monumental oil paintings measuring 340 x 260 cm, the exhibition reveals all the dizzying vibrancy and formal complexity that has distinguished Butzer’s recent practice, as well as the artist’s richly textured technique, and his characteristically witty and subversive attitude to art history.

Each of the four large canvases is built up from a base field of pure primary colour – yellow, blue, a rusty red and a fleshy tone, or Fleischfarbe, for Butzer the “leftover dead or living meat in the painting,” which has become a fourth primary colour in his work. Each field is then disrupted with often explosive arrangements of lines, shapes and tonal development. The chromatic programme around which the exhibition coheres, and the non-representational, geometric embellishments which animate each monochrome structure, might suggest that with these new works the artist is simply engaging in a neo-abstract expressionist meditation on form and colour, a conventional exploration of the aesthetic and emotional impact of paint. Yet Butzer’s art, rooted in a heady mix of expressionist traditions and Pop art, and often deploying images from an eclectic referential palette which embraces consumer commodities, German history, science fiction and cartoon culture, never conforms to such simple generic classification, nor embarks on such straightforward missions.

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