

Matthias Groebel

September 21–November 4

Ulrik is pleased to present Matthias Groebel's first solo exhibition in New York in two decades. The show includes works produced between the early 1990s and today.

Groebel's interest in painting is inseparable from his background in natural science. Unlike the art scene around him in 1980s Cologne, he never considered the medium dead. Using painting as a reference medium, he explores the diminishing life span of private and public pictures.

Groebel made his first machine-assisted painting in 1989. He built a plotter with an airbrush that allowed him a similar level of control over the mixture and density of pigments as in traditional painting techniques. When in West Germany broadcast television was transitioning from exclusively state-run channels to a wider array of programs accessible via satellite dish, Groebel became interested in decontextualized modes of looking.

Broadcast television was a companion to sleeplessness. In the reordered time of the broadcast signal one entered narrative sideways and without context. In addition, the low demand for late night air time provided a stage for strange low-budget programming. Groebel would tape these shows, while watching them on mute. Afterward he would go back to the images he remembered most and isolate them. He manipulated these pictures with an early editing software called Deluxe Paint, creating a sequence of layers to be applied on canvas by a machine-controlled spray gun. This process began, as in conventional painting, with the application of light and shadow.

By the beginning of the 1990s, the conceptual parameters for the series were set. No celebrities, no recognizable figures. The project is formed around an encounter with a decontextualized face. Later the presence of open captions provided another layer. Groebel accumulated a vast collection of footage that he would use to superimpose text over image.

With the introduction of paid subscriptions in the early 2000s, Groebel started using his own footage. For instance, *Untitled (176)* is based on an image the artist took in Chinatown and recalls the seventeenth century Flemish still life genre. *Untitled (204)* uses stereoscopic footage of a Turkish anti-terrorist protest in Cologne to amplify the content of the file intended for viewing via 3D glasses. The most recent works on paper are made using the "traveling salesman" algorithm. The images of a demonstration in Paris and restaurant windows in Chinatown are translated into layers of diagrams, each with non-intersecting lines.

Groebel's machine has been built and rebuilt over the years. What remains consistent in his practice is his interest in the memory-image and the impact that the passing image has on our attention span. "While I am still alive, the photos from my childhood are yellow, the files on my hard drive are broken, and yesterday's instagram image is gone."

Matthias Groebel (b. 1958, Aachen, DE) works and lives in Cologne. His selected solo exhibitions include *A Change in Weather (Broadcast Material 1989-2001)*, Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2022); *The Rhythms of Reception*, Schiefe Zähne, Berlin (2022); *Satellites Cast No Shadow*, curated by Andreas Selg, Drei, Cologne (2022); *Avid Signals (Broadcast Material 1989 - 2001)*, curated by Andreas Selg, Galerie Bernhard, Zurich (2021); *Embedded Painting*, Praxis Staat, Cologne (2009); *Save from Demons*, Livingroom, Cologne (2007); *Collective Memories*, Universal Concepts Unlimited, New York (2003); *Vanishing Points*, Universal Concepts Unlimited, New York (2002); *Fishing For Compliments*, Galerie Berndt, Cologne (2000); *Das neutrale Netz*, with Joseph Nechvatal, Galerie Karin Sachs, Munich (1997); *new.clear_wave*, Galerie Berndt, Cologne (1997); *alt.sex*, with Joseph Nechvatal, In Situ, Aalst (1996); *Matthais Groebel*, Galerie Berndt, Cologne (1995); *18+(5)+13*, Neuer Aachener Kunstverein (Kabinett), Aachen. Selected group exhibitions include *Unto Dust*, Fitzpatrick Gallery, Paris (2023); *Only One Step From Heaven*, curated by Reine Aliénor, La SIRA, Asnières-sur-Seine (2022); *The Wig*, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn (2022); *Mit Parallelität von Widersprüchen wird Komplexes missverständlicher*, Schiefe Zähne, Berlin (2022); *Tele-Gen*, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz (2016); *Human Frames*, Werkstatt der Kulturen, Berlin (2012); *Keine Clowns*, nur harte Typen, The Forgotten Bar Berlin (2010); *Soul Stripper*, Project Midi, Brussels (2008); *Vital Signs*, Maya Stendhal Gallery, New York (2005); *self-ish*, Scicult, London (2004); *Reality Revisited*, conceived by Matthias Groebel, In Situ, Aalst (2002); *R.E.D. (Remote Experience Dependency)*, Universal Concepts Unlimited, New York (2000); *Reflex*, Galerie Berndt, Cologne (1999); *Robot Paintings & Sound Installations*, In Situ, Aalst (1997); *...wie gemalt*, Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen (1995). A monograph of *Broadcast Material* series was published in 2022 by Edition Patrick Frey.