

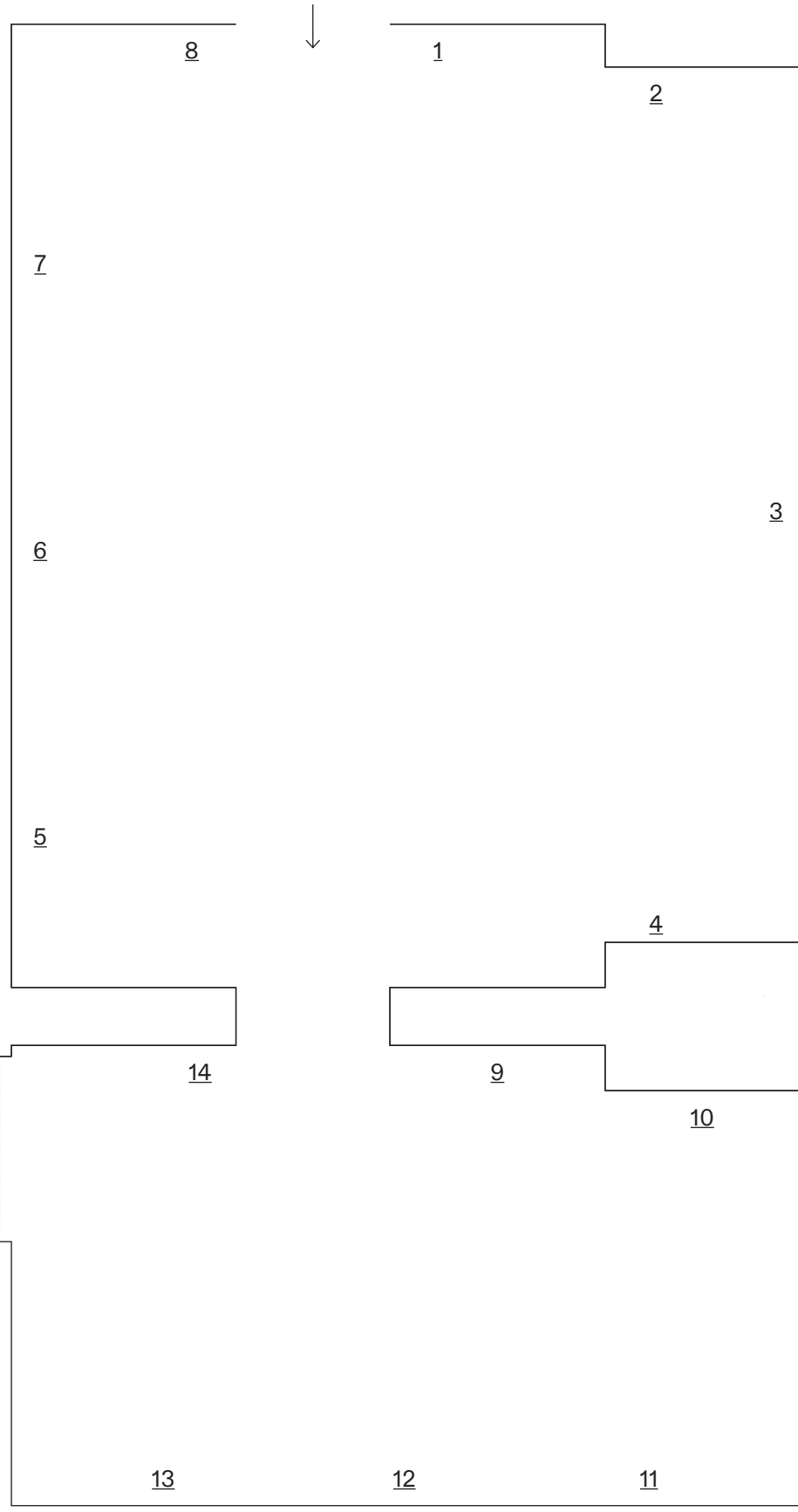
Hartmut Austen
WAS IST
September 10–
November 18, 2023

WAS IST, a solo exhibition by German-born and Boston-based painter Hartmut Austen, consists of a selection of paintings from the past several years which ties together reoccurring motifs within the artist's practice derived from three distinct approaches to painting: utilizing architectural/structural elements (lines, grids, windows, doorways), figuration (shadows, drone-like shapes, processions of people), and a spontaneous, intuitive decision making process that results in more introspective and formally abstract compositions. The first approach informs the way in which the work is installed: in this case, the fourteen paintings follow a horizon line or baseline; in some instances creating architectural space—archways, thresholds, passages—and in others dancing along the walls in a rhythmic fashion. This responsiveness during the installation draws formal elements of the architecture into the pictorial realm (e.g. how the lines of *Dream Fragment I* interact with the radiator lines in the gallery space which are then also echoed in the faded vertical line elements in *Himmelsfenster* in the site line between the smaller room and larger room of the gallery) and collapses reality with the fragmented dream-like quality that several of the surfaces invoke.

Over his more than three-decades long painting practice, Austen has developed an aptitude to move fluidly through his influences and tendencies: readily remixing approaches to painting that he has encountered from his student days in Berlin in the 1990s (which included a six months exchange in Chicago at SAIC in Fall 1994—his first extended stay in the United States) to establishing himself as an artist in Detroit in the 2000s, and through his journey as a professor: first in the Midwest (Iowa City, Minneapolis) then in the Northeast (Boston). *WAS IST* (translated as “what was” or “what is”) is firmly in the present, yet still acknowledges this past. It is an exhibition that reveals the artist's position as a constant searcher (as opposed to researcher): reevaluating, reassessing, and positing a very affirmative attitude towards painting while paradoxically questioning the role of painting. Within the inconsistencies of each work, the changes of direction, the artist proposes that painting is a sojourn rather than a settling.

WAS IST by Hartmut Austen is the artist's third solo exhibition with Good Weather and is on view until November 18, 2023, with gallery hours on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 1–6 p.m. or by appointment.

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1
Untitled, 2023
Oil on canvas
20 × 16 in

2
Key Figure, 2023
Oil on canvas
24 × 18 in

3
Three, 2022
Oil on canvas
16 × 20 in

4
Untitled, 2023
Oil on linen
16 × 12 in

5
Himmelsfenster, 2018
Tempera and acrylics
on canvas
78 × 55 in

6
Untitled, 2023
Oil on canvas
60 × 48 in

7
Gawkers, 2021
Oil on canvas
75 × 60 in

8
Untitled, 2020
Oil on canvas
20 × 16 in

9
Dream Fragment I, 2023
Acrylic and oil on linen
48 × 36 in

10
Dream Fragment II, 2023
Oil on linen
48 × 36 in

11
The News, 2023
Oil on canvas
62.25 × 55 in

12
Dream Fragment III, 2023
Oil on linen
48 × 36 in

13
Two Horizons, 2022
Oil on canvas
47.3 × 59 in

14
Façade, 2023
Oil on linen
20 × 16 in

Hartmut Austen (b. 1967 Lüdenscheid, Germany) studied painting and drawing with H.J. Diehl at Hochschule der Künste (University of the Arts) in Berlin. His first arrival in the United States was marked by a 1998 group exhibition titled *VOID* at Unfinished (Brooklyn) and he has since exhibited widely in the United States and Germany, including at Terzo Piano (Washington, D.C.) (Curated by Olga Viso), REYES | FINN (Detroit), Atlanta Contemporary, Good Weather (North Little Rock), Waiting Room (Minneapolis), The Bedfellow's Club (Chicago), and The Butcher's Daughter (Detroit). Recent solo shows include *Künstliche und Künstlerische Intelligenz* at Haus zur Glocke (Steckborn, Switzerland), *Aus Analogen Archiven* at OnArte (Minusio, Switzerland), and a survey of his work from the past decade at McMullen Museum of Art (Boston). In 2009, Austen was awarded a Kresge Arts in Detroit Fellowship and was the Grant Wood Fellow for Painting and Drawing at the University of Iowa in 2012/13. He is an Associate Professor in Painting at Boston College.