

HANNAH HOFFMAN

Raphaela Simon, *Echo*

May 11 - June 22, 2024

Opening Reception on Saturday, May 11 from 12-5pm

Hannah Hoffman is pleased to present *Echo*, a solo exhibition of work by Raphaela Simon. In the spirit of her previous shows, Simon draws on a narrative reference for the title of this exhibition. Ovid's *Echo*, who can only speak words someone else has spoken, exists as a voice long after her bones have turned to stone. Simon's momentous canvases, depicting reduced forms in carefully controlled color palettes, mirror this myth by amplifying the existing narratives surrounding her subjects with bold simplicity. Even when Simon indulges fully in the abstract, she teases us with titles (like *Elefant* or *Frosch*) that tell us what to look for, cleverly exemplifying the way our mind distorts based on predefined associations. Her shifting symbols of language and brushstroke play against each other to depict compellingly soulful characters and circumstances.

Much of the new work for *Echo* is titled after physical phenomena - centrifugal force, vertigo, hot air. Heaviness and gravity often sink Simon's subjects towards the bottom of the canvas. Limitations, built in with the rules of representation and the aesthetic patterns of Simon's own practice, push her compositions to the point where they cease to describe the world and instead become something in the world itself. Her intuition is on display in the painterly, physical aspects of her work - the mark making, built up paint, and mistake-turned-underpainting.

Simon straddles the border of persona and mask with these paintings - in *Spalte*, we see a cleft spine dividing a character in two, while the disembodied heads in other paintings reject specificity in order to evoke feelings that belong to everyone. Desocialized with black backgrounds and impersonal expressions, her paintings become an atmosphere in and of themselves. At times, the masks seem to bleed into their environment - a spiral becomes a set of teeth, the eye or ear an entry point to Simon's shadows. The tension of getting too close to the subject at hand implies an underlying violence, complicating Simon's guiding tenet of clarity.

Raphaela Simon (b. 1986, Villingen, Germany) lives and works in Berlin. She received her MFA from the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in 2015. Solo exhibitions include Oldenburger Kunstverein, Oldenburg, Germany (2024); Fondazione Giuliani, Rome

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(2023); Galerie Max Hertzler, Berlin (2023); Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf, Germany (2022); Hannah Hoffman Gallery, Los Angeles (2021); Galerie Max Hertzler, Paris (2020); Michael Werner Gallery, London (2019); Michael Werner Gallery, New York (2017). Select group exhibitions include UNCLEBROTHER, New York (2023); Michael Werner Gallery, London (2023), Cassius & Co, London (2023), David Zwirner, New York (2022); Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany (2022); Alfonso Artiaco Gallery, Naples, Italy (2021); Daimler Art Collection, Berlin (2021); SITE131, Dallas, TX (2021); Victoria Miro, London (2018); TRAMPS, London (2014).