

## The Exhibition Text

The exhibition AUTORN is a situation that suggests an action. The situation consists of a group of artworks—five paintings, three sculptures and one installation—and me, the exhibition text, who finds itself in the middle of it. My own role is unclear: am I part of this grouping or did I join later?

Like the hand in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Flemish group portraits, I was allocated a central position in the middle of the scene: I point out of the image and address you, the viewer, directly. This gesture is a sign that includes you in the circle of those portrayed and relates the imaginary space of the picture to social reality. The imaginary space of AUTORN is a situation on the threshold of opening and refusal, of access and exclusion, of proximity and difference.

The paintings scale the space horizontally: in several layers of applied paint, the image extends into depth. The materiality of painting comes to the fore—including its set of rules, which flushes supposed errors like abjects to the surface. These opaque pictures permit no illusion, but hide in order to make visible what lies beneath. They are an invitation to devote yourself to them. With this I cannot help you, since what is not legible does not want to be described.

Vertically, a sculpture lingers between cellar and exhibition space. The object promises of transporting one or more persons from one room to another. But the movement has come to a standstill and it remains unclear whether this is a pause, an interruption or the destination. A clue that reveals a mystery that wasn't a mystery until there was a clue. The idea of a time before or after this moment imposes itself on you, the vision of a person that could be you. Without an exemplary action taking place, the situation obtains a meaning.

An action is dependent on a subject that carries it out. It shares this fate with the sentence. The linguistic subject is usually a noun or pronoun. As I don't know your name, I wasn't sure how to address you. Who is your proxy in the text?—

who acts? I could refer to you as your role, the viewer. Like a character in a play, you would follow my instructions. Or I could speak for you and claim that “we” are sharing the same experience. An offer of identification that is an invitation to be rejected. Or I could exert my authority, coyly covering my tracks, then we’d both just be “one”. But hopefully we both know that’s no solution. In the end, I opted for “you”—because I’m not an author, not your friend nor the measure of all things.

Like the central figure in the middle of a group portrait, who turns away from the action and casually gestures with its hand towards you, I am still part of the depicted society, but my fingertip is already here, with you. My true function is to create a situation in which you feel addressed and remain on the threshold in front of the image. Not quite outside, not quite inside—waiting for an action to take place.

Leonie Huber