

Capitain Petzel

Thomas Eggerer

Galeria

2 November – 21 December 2024

Capitain Petzel is pleased to announce Thomas Eggerer's first solo exhibition with the gallery, opening on 2 November 2024.

For *Galeria*, the artist has created a monumental work titled *Fitness* (2024). We see a meticulously arranged scene of figures engaged in various activities within a sprawling, mirrored gym-like space, where the interaction of forms and poses blurs the line between individual presence and collective choreography. The arrangements within the composition recall the structure of history painting, but instead of depicting a grand event, Eggerer focuses on how bodies and spaces intersect through forms, gesture and pose.

Alongside *Fitness*, the artist selected a set of five paintings from an earlier body of work, which present scenes of protest. The figures hold signs and wave flags, though their gestures appear directed toward an undefined viewer. The flags billow freely, suggesting movement and energy, while the figures beneath appear static, their limbs awkwardly positioned as if loosely attached. Also here the focus shifts from individual figures to the orchestrated arrangement of movements, while the groupings and subtle variations suggest underlying bonds of community and collective presence. This approach not only adds to the visual complexity of Eggerer's paintings, but also reflects his interest in the fragmented nature of contemporary social experiences.

The figurative elements in Eggerer's paintings are never fully described by the use of color, space, form, or light. However, they do not become purely abstract either. Some elements – logos, objects, or familiar imagery – offer a sense of concrete reality, grounding the viewer in the identifiable. Yet, this familiarity is disrupted by the presence of something that remains obscured. Eggerer avoids overly realistic effects or any strong narrative illusions. It's akin to encountering doors that cannot be opened; pathways are suggested, but never fully revealed. The result is a series of compositions that suggest a world more intuitive and painterly than rigidly logical or constructed. As Helmut Draxler has stated, "instead of individual imprints and expressionist effects, this artistic approach always thematizes either people in groups, or social spaces, and on a formal level this brings the conventions of painting itself into play".

On view in the downstairs exhibition space of the gallery is a series of collages set against the background of Eggerer's work *Tanning* – a wallpaper of an archival image that depicts a large group of people sunbathing and lounging on stadium bleachers, with colorful towels spread out across the seats. In his own words, the artist highlights his appreciation for the "breathtaking treasures" these visual archives hold, from intimate locker room moments to sunbathers in sports arenas. His collages, however, transform these ordinary scenes into complex compositions that resist immediate consumption. Eggerer's collages often feature a "stuttering" effect, as described by David Joselit, where similar actions or groups appear from different angles or moments in time, creating a cinematic layering that compresses successive images into a single, simultaneous visual experience.

Thomas Eggerer (born 1963 in Munich, Germany) has exhibited internationally at Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Castello di Rivoli, Turin; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; Brandhorst Museum, Munich; Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien; White Columns, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; Vancouver Art Gallery; CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco, and Frankfurter Kunstverein, among many others.

Eggerer was also a member of Group Material, a renowned movement of conceptual artists active between 1979 and 1996. As of 2024, Eggerer has been appointed Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich.