

Ellen Gronemeyer

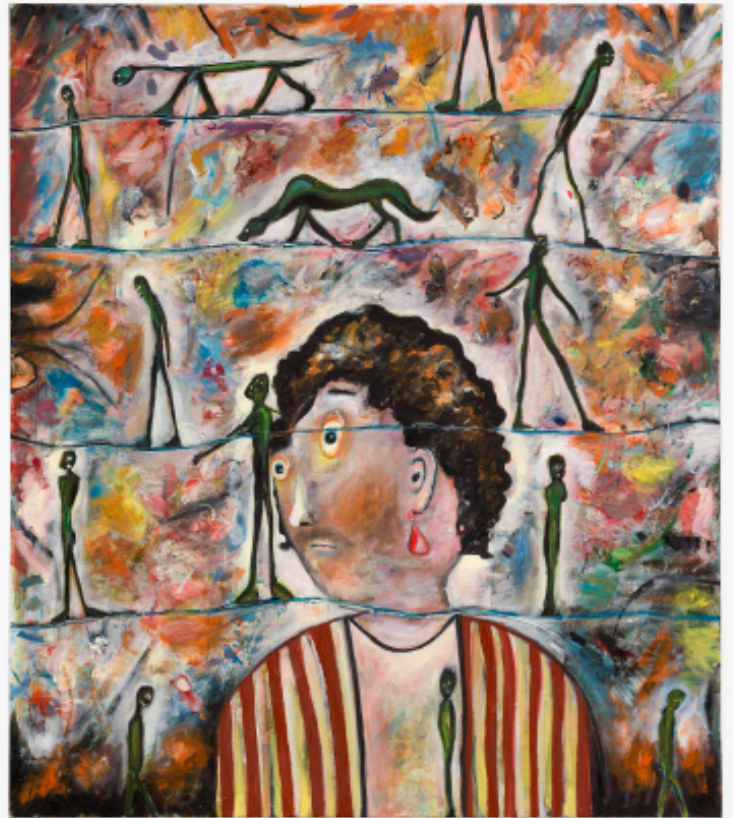
16.11.24–8.1.25

“My studio practice involves painting 30 to 50 images over an extended period of months and years. Layering is essential to my technique. Decisions about lines, shapes, colors, or concepts are not set in stone; I can immediately repaint or discard any idea, allowing for uncertainty. At the same time, I continually make and implement decisions, creating a sense of self in the process.”

– Ellen Gronemeyer

In her painting, Ellen Gronemeyer develops an impressive radicalism that allows her to encounter the world with an open mind - somewhere between spontaneity and logic.

Ellen Gronemeyer's painting combines elements of popular culture with classic art genres such as portraiture, landscapes and social studies. She draws on iconic, often everyday motifs, which she positions in a contemporary context. This combination of familiar, popular imagery and traditional art genres leads to an idiosyncratic, often humorous, but also critical examination of reality. Her protagonists are bizarre, sometimes comic-like creatures like dogs, plants or people. In her works, fantasy and reality collide, often creating grotesque yet humorous scenarios. Anything is possible: figures that alternate between imagination and realism convey a world in which both the limits of imagination and reality are called into question. Shifting back and forth between directness and complexity, Ellen Gronemeyer develops her painting style, which is reminiscent of the gestures of French Fauvism, Art Informel and Expressionism.



Jako, 2024

Oil and acrylic on canvas

160 x 140 cm

Her figures are not only positioned in the painting, rather they also seem to be permeated through the pictorial plane. This process character is a central component of her working method: Gronemeyer often works on 30 to 50 paintings simultaneously. The canvases are initially used as a palette on which the first layer of paint is created beyond her immediate control. The scenes and motifs are then developed in a lengthy process of continuous overpainting until she achieves the final image.

The material-emphasized painting style with encrusted, opulent layers of paint makes her pictures appear as a “total presence” on the canvas. Simultaneously, the viewer's gaze is drawn into surreal scenarios and motifs. Ambiguities emerge, revealing Gronemeyer's profound but also playful world of thought - a world that can also be read as a commentary on our current reality.

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A central theme in Gronemeyer's work is alienation. The title of her current exhibition, Newcomer, which includes works such as "Emotional Haircut", "All My Friends", "Seconds", "Jako", "Call the Police" and "Headliner", can also be understood in this context. The philosopher Rahel Jaeggi describes alienation as a "relationship of unrelatedness", a paradoxical state in which one is "involved and yet uninvolved". This alienation can be seen in Gronemeyer's works, which "remove" familiar visual worlds and thus open up an open view of reality and its new possibilities.

The titles of the works often play a decisive role: they concretize the world of motifs, but also open up room for interpretation. Gronemeyer refers not only to visual impressions, but also to an entire cultural and often pop-cultural world of references that draws on music, films and literature.

One example of this association is the picture Jako, which is not a reference to the artist Alberto Giacometti, rather to a person called Jaque de Barscher, who inspired Karl Lagerfeld to create his perfume. Jako was a dandy who had a tragic story - a character who exemplifies the fragile balance between success and defeat.

The delicate, almost fragile sculptures by Giacometti, which Gronemeyer uses here as a reference, reflect this fragile existence. These figures, which in Gronemeyer's works often oscillate between genders or plants and human beings, are also testimonies to a perception that exists beyond traditional categories - they are partly trans, partly hybrid, between day and night, between inside and outside.

In Ellen Gronemeyer's paintings, not only do the boundaries between beings, times of day and places become blurred, but matter itself also dissolves. Figures and scenes can transform into abstract, materialized forms in the blink of an eye. The colors and brushstrokes lose their representational nature and develop a presence of their own, whereby the works reflect a constant state of change - the visible is repeatedly transformed into vibrant material.

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Loosing my edge, 2024

Oil and board on canvas

50 x 40 cm

Biographical note:

Ellen Gronemeyer was born in 1979 in Germany. She graduated from the Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg in 2005, and currently lives and works in Berlin, Germany. She taught at the Chelsea College of Arts and Design in London and has been appointed the Junior Professor of Painting at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf since 2017. Her work has been exhibited in several international galleries and major institutions, including the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof, Hamburg, Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst Aachen, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Sammlung Falkenberg, Hamburg, musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, Bordeaux. Her work is held in notable collections including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago; Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen; Kunsthalle Bern, Bern and Hammer Museum of Art, Los Angeles.

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