

*the Lord will spit out the lukewarm*

Violet Dennison, Kelsey Isaacs, Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven, Olivia van Kuiken

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The Upstairs

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Inscribed on the wall of the legendary Düsseldorf punk bar the Ratinger Hof was its motto: “*Either you are hot or cold, the lukewarm ones the Lord will spit out of his mouth*”. The adage was ushered in with the radical renovation to the bar in 1971, by two women, Carmen Knoebel and Ingrid Kohlhöfer, who then happened to be the romantic partners of two other artists, Imi Knoebel and Blinky Palermo. Ratinger Hof introduced a stylistic shift that mirrored the contemporary and experimental tendencies of art and music in 1970s; the space was transformed with painted white walls and neon lights, the latter inspired by the works of Dan Flavin. The newly installed lurid lights were an invitation for those bold enough to enter. Scene set, the club became home to cutting edge musical acts of the period, where art and music dared in tandem.

This exhibition presents four artists, three New York-based painters of the same generation, Violet Dennison, Kelsey Isaacs, Olivia van Kuiken, and Belgian artist and experimental musician Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven (AMVK). Presenting new work by each artist, the exhibition negotiates taste, community, and history’s formation through shifts in attitude. *the Lord will spit out the lukewarm* is less a reflection on a larger contemporary preoccupation with post-war German influence, than an investigation of a specific site as blueprint for reinvention. Each painting deals with images in circulation, citing in the process of spilling, shuffling, piling, and ultimately disrupting the flow of this inherited content. The artists insist that that which already exists is latent with potentiality, incited through newly applied formal and discursive conditions.

Violet Dennison (b. 1989, lives and works in New York) has exhibited at the New Museum Triennial and Kunstverein Friburg. A recent solo exhibition was held at Tara Downs in New York.

Olivia van Kuiken (b. 1997, lives and works in New York) has recently exhibited at Sies+Höke in Düsseldorf, Germany and Château/Shatto in Los Angeles.

Kelsey Isaacs (b. 1994, lives and works in New York) has had solo exhibitions at Theta, New York and Clima, Milan.

Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven (b. 1951, lives and works in Antwerp) has been producing work and exhibiting since 1980. Together with her partner Danny Devos, she has produced experimental music under the name Club Moral since 1981. Solo exhibitions of her work have been held at at Fridericianum, Kassel; The Renaissance Society, Chicago; Kunstverein Hannover; Kunstverein München, Munich; Kunsthalle Bern; FRAC Pays de la Loire, Carquefou; Mu.ZEE, Ostend; WIELS, Brussels; M HK, Antwerp; DAAD, Berlin, and Kunstmuseum Luzern.