

*MANufactoRAY* is the fifth solo exhibition of the German-Swiss artist René Luckhardt at Galerie Bernd Kugler in Innsbruck. The exhibition's title is a pun on words combining the concept of an artistic manufactory with a tribute to the great photographer of Modernism, Man Ray. Unlike him, however, Luckhardt does not constrain his works to oil paintings in contemporary colors, but playfully develops his own completely independent form of painting. A photographic portrait of Frieda Kahlo becomes a fictitious "Frieder", and a black-and-white bunch of flowers is transformed into a colorful frieze. In another work, the artist takes one of Man Ray's portraits to create a painted sculpture which, absurdly, is carried by plane surfaces two-dimensionally stacked upon each other. Hands are isolated and rearranged so that in Luckhardt's large-scale painting they elegantly reach into blank space.

Analyses and explorations of other artists, particularly Modernist ones, are a popular phenomenon in contemporary art. Rarely, however, do they turn out to be as original as in the works of Luckhardt, who appraises Man Ray's unbridled experimentation and who addresses the present state of art production using the term "manufactory". Artists are aware of what they owe to their ancestors, and as Luckhardt states himself: "Art can always only emerge from a confrontation with art." And, at least since Thutmose, art always originates in the workshop of the artist, which today – in line with Andy Warhol's factory – must temporarily be denominated Manufactory.

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