

For the first time the two New York based visual artists Mary Heilmann (b. 1940 in San Francisco) and David Reed (b. 1946 in San Diego) present their expressive and intensely colourful works in the form of a dialogue in the specially designed joint exhibition *Two By Two* at the Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin. The art works shown span the four decades since the seventies. As the title *Two By Two* already suggests, the central focus of the exhibition is formed by – nineteen – pairs of images, which show the works in unusual mutual proximity. In this symbiosis they can no longer be viewed separately from each other, but merge with the viewer's imagination in a new way.

Both artists are key figures in American painting. In the early seventies they established a new home for abstract painting beyond its traditional boundaries, between figuration and abstraction, committing themselves to a narrative and emotional approach. Although the two artists moved their places of artistic experience and work to the East Coast as long ago as the 1960s, their oeuvres are, in different ways, still shaped by their Californian origins and personal memories.

Heilmann's work is influenced by music and photography, but also by her everyday surroundings. Her video installation *Her Life* (2006) proves that even today she still applies the ways of seeing she describes as experienced in childhood. This is suggested, for instance, by the vigorous colourfulness of *Cabrillo* (1995) or by titles such as *Wavey* (2013) or *The Glass Bottomed Boat* (1994). Heilmann's formal vocabulary is indebted to Pop Art, Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism, yet she has developed her very own ironic and deconstructivist approach.

In Reed's work photography and fascination with the cinema were the influences which have left their traces in his cinematically inspired pictorial language. The main characteristics of his oeuvre are gestural dynamism, the choice of starkly contrasting colours and extreme horizontal formats. Just as in Heilmann's case, the impressions of his childhood in California have had a lasting impact on his oeuvre, as is particularly evident in his new work *In Our Solitude* (2015).

The works of both artists illustrate their critical engagement with various tendencies in modern painting. Heilmann as well as Reed go beyond the limitations of the panel picture when, for example, they cross and open the image's boundaries by contrasting light and colour effects or multiple picture formations. In Reed's work this stylistic device has become particularly obvious since his visual installations of the nineties based on Alfred Hitchcock's film classic *Vertigo*. In his multimedia work *Scottie's Bedroom*, which is part of this exhibition, he focuses on the relationship between the museum visitor and the exhibited pictures. Heilmann for her part goes beyond the limits of two- dimensionality with her ceramic works and her furniture designs.

For *Two By Two* Heilmann and Reed have for the first time formed a temporary alliance in a joint exhibition, in order to test out possible oppositions, tensions and correspondences between their creative positions.

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