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THILO HEINZMANN
ALWAYS A PLEASURE
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Press Release

dépendance is pleased to announce *Always a Pleasure*, Thilo Heinzmann's fifth solo exhibition with the gallery.

In the pursuit of beauty, there can be no shortcuts. We might even say that there can be no such pursuit insofar as, once beauty becomes an end in itself, its chances of ever appearing are significantly diminished. For Thilo Heinzmann, in any case, beauty is not an end in itself. But the 'no shortcuts' part – that part is crucial to understanding this artist's work, in which countless careful steps have been taken in myriad directions, slowly building up a painterly language as multifarious as it is grammatically tight-knit.

Heinzmann orchestrates his painterly gestures, ranging from the minimal through the brutal, the beautiful and the funny, within a closely established framework. This is part of their special openness to call-and-response, to be conjured under the influence, in proximity and conversation with other things. To not merely read but see – to really be with this work – confers the impression that Heinzmann collects moves and adds them to the repertoire. The immense joy that there is in this expansion is evident in the works, an untiring curiosity at an unending experiment.

Heinzmann's pigment paintings have become more and more colorful and, with that, have increasingly begun to embrace connotations. But more than that they have become painterly in the straightforward sense that paint has been applied to them – liquid paint. There are brush and fingermarks. With these works Heinzmann steps into the full potential of the language he's developed. There is an element of play here, language come apart and put back together. What the post-structuralists called *jouissance*: the pleasure of language as it transgresses its own boundaries.

The most recent paintings contain these traces: fingers dragged across the canvas; that reified gesture, the brush stroke. As materials stray and meanings seep in, we recognise the contamination that has always characterised Heinzmann's way of working. Even as he testifies to having looked for what is 'right', he has also always been on this other path, mixing registers, playing around. Where these latest paintings feel different, is that all those years of parallel strides of purity and contamination seem to have made possible a more straightforward expression of beauty. Traditional paint, actual brush strokes, high abstraction. The tension here is not between vulgar materials and 'fine' art, but in this oscillation, finely calibrated now for three decades, between controlling a gesture – an impulse, a thought – and setting it free.

Excerpts from Kristian Vistrup Madsen's essay "Also – Ways Through the Work of Thilo Heinzmann", in: Thilo Heinzmann, 2025, pp. 20-28

Thilo Heinzmann (1969, Germany) lives and works in Berlin, Germany. He recently had exhibitions at neugerriemschneider Berlin; Gagosian London; and Perrotin, Seoul. His work is in several public institutional collections including Tate Modern, London; M+ Museum, Hong Kong; Tiroler Landesmuseum, Innsbruck; Museo Insular Cabildo de la Palma, Santa Cruz de La Palma, and the Sammlung zeitgenössischer Kunst der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. In 2018, he was appointed Professor of Painting at Universität der Künste Berlin.