

Press release

We are happy to open our new gallery in Geneva with a group show which reflects the concept of Galerie Mezzanin of putting international, emerging artists such as Gerald Domenig, Christian Mayer and Mandla Reuter in context with established and referential artists such as Thomas Bayrle. After operating a non-profit off-space, Karin Handlbauer opened Galerie Mezzanin in 2002 in Vienna, which is also now situated in Geneva.

There is an obsessive and darkly visionary quality about much of Thomas Bayrle's work but, crucially, there is also plenty of wry humour and pleasure in the absurd and the idiotic. Contrary to the visually pluralistic tendencies of other artists with mixed allegiances to Pop and Conceptual art as well as media critique, his work seems to have remained doggedly consistent for decades. Ever-present is his engagement with advertising and comparisons between mass iconography and systems in the East and West including religion, technology and sex. In his books, collages, paintings, graphics, drawings, computer animations, sculptures, films and videos, he has accomplished what many aspire to achieve but few actually do: to articulate a unique and transfixing visual language.

Thomas Bayrle (*1937, Berlin) lives and works in Frankfurt a.M., where he was professor at the Städelschule from 1975 to 2005. Amongst others Bayrle had solo exhibitions at Institut d'Art Contemporain, Villeurbanne (2014), MADRE, Naples (2013), WIELS, Brussels (2013), MACBA, Barcelona (2009), Mamco, Geneva (2009), Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2008-2009), MMK, Frankfurt a.M. (2006) and Städel Museum, Frankfurt a.M. (2002).

Christian Mayer uses a variety of methods to examine how the time scales of images and objects can be extended and stretched beyond the confines of their original historical moments. With great precision, he brings different (popular) cultural, political and social contexts together in charming and visually intense tableaux. Recent works examine phenomena as varied as time capsules, fossilisation and the persistence and evolution of language over years and generations.

Christian Mayer (*1976 Sigmaringen, Germany) lives and works in Vienna. He is represented in the collections of MUMOK, Albertina, Belvedere and EVN, and has been exhibited amongst others in Belvedere (2013), MUMOK (2011), Centre d'Art Passerelle, Brest (2009), Manifest 7, Trentino (2008), Kerava Art Museum, Helsinki (2008).

Gerald Domenig says "My work is about media subtleties, grayzones, osmosis, gobetweenism, guest-media". By the last term he means the halo of expectations and assumptions that the image brings with it because we know or think we know its agenda: commercial, artistic, journalistic, and so on. But these categories are not exactly stable; Domenig's images treat everyday commodities — a Nivea tin, a packet of tissues, a loaf of bread — as if they were sculptural objects and at the same time flat simulacra. Gerald Domenig (*1953, Villach, Austria) lives and works in Frankfurt a.M. He has had solo exhibitions amongst others at Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2008) and Portikus, Frankfurt a.M., with Franz West (1988). In 2015 he will have solo shows at the Vienna Secession and in Frankfurt MMK.

The works of Mandla Reuter are simultaneously as discreet as camouflage and as obtrusive and self-evident as road blocks. This ambiguous material economy suggests Reuter's concern with spatial functions and their transformation: what controls and represents space, what speeds space up and slows it down, and how flows of information and bodies may be re-routed. Reuter's work may bring to mind the relocation pieces of the contextual artist Michael Asher, or it may be approached as a kind of pop or appropriation art that has shed its universalism in favour of intervention.

Mandla Reuter (*1975, Nqutu, South Afrika) lives and works in Basel and Berlin. He has had solo exhibitions amongst others at Kunstmuseum Bonn (2014), Kunsthalle Basel (2013) and Vleeshal, Middelburg (2011) and has been shown amongst others in Sorø Kunstmuseum, Denmark and Kunsthalle Basel (2013) MADE IN GERMANY ZWEI, Sprengel Museum Hannover (2012), Kunsthaus Baselland, Skulpturenpark Cologne, Overbeck Gesellschaft Lübeck, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2011), Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2011).