

BQ

Matti Braun “Rion”

Opening September 11, 2025, 6–10 pm
Exhibition September 12–November 15, 2025

For Berlin Art Week 2025, BQ presents a solo exhibition by Matti Braun (b. 1968, Berlin; lives and works in Cologne) featuring a new series of glass works.

Matti Braun views objects as sedimented forms, as crystallisations of overlapping stories. His works map a network of global transmission processes, and are at once a trace and a catalyst. They subvert cultural attributions and conventions of originality, authorship, and modernity. Whether Indian film, batik, or glass, Braun explores aesthetic spheres that lie beyond the established art world. He conducts research, visits production sites, learns traditional techniques, and temporarily becomes part of the micro- and macrosystems unfolding at the margins of cities, countries, and narratives. His series of experiments result in intermedia works ranging from photographs and paintings to lectures and installations.

1 · Glass

A green glass sphere was Matti Braun’s first work in glass. It served as the main prop in his 2006 play “The Alien”, abstractly representing a coconut. Based on a 1967 screenplay by Indian director Satyajit Ray, the play tells the story of a peaceful alien who makes an emergency landing in a lotus pond and befriends a young boy. This character can be found in Bengali folklore and later in Steven Spielberg’s “E.T.” – although Spielberg denies any influence. Since then, Braun has been working with glassmakers around Dresden and the Bavarian-Czech border. He delves into the aesthetic and social fields of glass art, studying everything from Baroque court glass to post-war experiments and working with glassblowers – and has seen many glassblowing workshops close in recent years.

2 · Frauenau

In the 1960s, another glass art movement emerged in Frauenau, Bavaria, which fused traditional craftsmanship and contemporary art in a new way: as serial mass production had increasingly replaced craftsmanship, Erwin Eisch returned to his parents’ glassblowing workshop after completing his studies at the art academy in Munich and brought the avant-garde art scene to Frauenau. He founded the *Studio Glass* movement in Germany and established a network that extended as far as Harvey Littleton in California. *Studio Glass* represented the opening up of the medium as well as a movement to counter the industrial forms of Minimal Art – but it remained a temporary phenomenon.

3 · Aliens

Matti Braun’s disc-shaped works, manufactured in Frauenau, are *aliens* in the world of glass art: he gains knowledge about the craft of glassmaking and inflects it with the grammar of conceptual art. Each disc is unique and composed concentrically as a result of the technical process. Some form defined colour fields, while others feature colours that merge into one another, ranging from transparent to iridescent. The glass works combine contradictions, much like Braun’s batiks and silk paintings. They are handcrafted and individual, yet devoid of painterly gestures and an individual signature. In his batik works, Braun draws on the wax resist technique used for socially coded garments in Indonesia and intertwines it with the minimalism of Western post-war art. Their delicate, irregularly drawn lines do not result in an anonymous geometry, but in an unstable, shimmering, individual image. Braun’s silk paintings are based on dyeing techniques used in religious and ritual contexts. Their colours run into one another in their own dynamic way, evoking the radiance of Baroque skies. Both the paintings and the glass works elude categories, concepts, and our gaze. They oscillate between everyday objects, cultural references, abstract images, and concrete art.

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4 · Overlaps

The flat glass works form a window installation through which light casts colour-shifting shadows into the space. They allude to medieval church windows, crown glass panes made from production waste, and even the glass architecture of Bruno Taut and Mies van der Rohe. Each disc represents one possibility among many. They capture fluid states, interact with the weather, and reflect their surroundings. They follow a migratory logic in which materials, perceptions, and meanings are in perpetual flux. The philosopher Édouard Glissant describes world culture as a similar process of constantly changing relationships. He contrasts the 'crystal-clear' *transparency* characteristic of Western modernity with the concept of *opacity* arising from overlapping layers: "*Relation* is not made up of things that are foreign, but of shared knowledge. It is not fusion, not dilution, not abandonment. It is *opacity*— consent not to be 'a single being', consent to be other, consent to the limits of understanding." ¹

Text by Juliane Duft

¹ Édouard Glissant, *Poétique de la Relation* (Paris, 1990), p. 191; translated from the original: La Relation n'est pas faite de choses qui sont étrangères les unes aux autres, mais de savoirs partagés. Elle n'est pas fusion, elle n'est pas dilution, elle n'est pas abandon. Elle est opacité, consentement à ne pas être 'un seul être', consentement à être autre, consentement aux limites de la compréhension.