

# The approach

Helene Appel  
*Waves*

24<sup>th</sup> February – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Preview: Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017, 6 – 9 pm

Helene Appel's attention to detail is manifest in a forensic gaze onto familiar objects from an aerial view: the full-to-the-brim kitchen sink, uncooked pasta, a puddle of spilled water, a Pollack fillet. The discarded, the everyday, and the domestic are represented objectively and yet, the very act of painting these motifs admits tender attention. Her forthcoming solo exhibition of new paintings at The Approach attest the German artist's precision and diligence, and asserts a quiet defiance to the cliché of the 'intuitive' gesture of the genius painter.

Appel's new series of seashore paintings differ to the discrete objects that she places on a table in her studio to paint at actual size. The paintings of seawater and the sandy ground bear a relationship to photography in their cropped composition, which does not aim to represent the vista or the landscape from a panoptical position. The installation in the gallery emphasises scale through its stark contrasts between the seawater paintings at architectural scales and a miniature canvas that can accommodate only a single piece of farfalle.

An interest in the representation of transparency and surface carries through from the shore pictures to other motifs: a water spill is adeptly rendered with only a few strokes of translucent white where the light hits the curved edge of the liquid. The viewer's haptic gaze gauges the shimmering wetness of fish fillets rendered in oil and encaustic. Appel has coated the carefully rendered scabs of food that float at the bottom of the basin with a thick layer of transparent paint that has solidified to represent the depth of the sink.

The tidal sea is, of course, a symbol of perpetual flow. Time and transformation are implicit throughout this exhibition: the spilled water will be mopped up any minute now, the dishwasher will drain, the raw fish will be thrown into a hot pan or onto crushed ice, and the pasta is headed for boiling water.

Helene Appel was born in Karlsruhe, Germany (1976). She studied in Hamburg and London and now lives and works in Berlin. Selected solo exhibitions include: *Washing Up*, P420, Bologna (2016); James Cohan Gallery, New York (2014); The Approach, London (2013); *Kaiserringstipendium*, Kunstmuseum Goslar, Germany (2011). Recent group shows include: *I Prefer Life*, The Weserburg, Bremen; *Is this living?*, The Approach (both 2016); *Painting Show - Part One*, Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle, Munich; *Helene Appel, Olga Balema, Simon Logan*, Galerie Luis Campaña, Berlin (both 2015); *QUEENSIZE - Female Artists from the Olbricht Collection*, me Collections Room, Berlin (2014-2015); *SOME / THINGS*, Proyectos Monclova, Mexico City (2014); *Luce, Giorno: Helene Appel, Antonio Calderara*, P420, Bologna; *A Scene of Painting Today*, Centro per l'arte contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato (2013).

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