

PRESS RELEASE

June 2021

Claas Reiss presents new works by Karlsruhe, Germany based artist Tenki Hiramatsu in his first show in the UK and an essay by Pia Bendfeld

'Good Con Man'

Tenki Hiramatsu

23 June - 24 July 2021

Private view Wednesday 23 June 2021 12pm to 8pm

Claas Reiss is pleased to announce 'Good Con Man' with new works by Japanese artist Tenki Hiramatsu in his first show in the UK and an essay written by Pia Bendfeld.

'What makes a good con man? Particularly his ability to construct a convincing illusion without being demystified.

In this regard, the artist Tenki Hiramatsu may be considered to be the good con man himself, creating illusions with his painting to which we as viewers succumb inevitably.

This illusion lies in the supposed (re-)cognition of figurative and pictorial motifs within the works. At Claas Reiss, the selection of works shows several cartoon-like characters wearing top hats. These recurring pictorial elements seem to be references or follow a symbology. But the motifs do not refer to anything, however it appears. Rather than carrying a symbolic meaning, they are formal decisions within the composition of the picture and make us believe to suggest a narrative.

And yet the artist does not pretend to tell a story. His paintings are created intuitively, without a template or a sketch. Until the end, the process is like an experiment in which Tenki Hiramatsu relinquishes control and allows unexpected things to happen. Accordingly, the narrative level of the paintings does not arise consciously. The figures form dynamically, born from the brushstroke. Thus the result - the final composition of the picture - is full of surprising discoveries for the painter himself each time.

These discoveries are also made by the viewer, who explores the pictorial landscape and encounters the new and the (supposedly) familiar. There is no prescribed interpretation. As viewers, we construct the narrative in dialogue with the image, through our own associations and memories.

At this point, the binarity of reality and illusion blurs. The paintings become their own reality, based on a two-dimensional space that can nevertheless open up an infinite depth and a world of its own.

Precisely this specific quality answers the relevance of the medium of painting in times of digital image production. For Tenki Hiramatsu, it consists in the illusion of a world created only through painting and not on the basis of an existing logic. Accordingly, one searches for signs of a landscape in vain, as in the work of his painterly pioneers Ken Kiff or Emil Nolde.

What the viewer encounters instead are multi-layered colour fields. Yet the works within the exhibition show a similar colour palette; primarily dingy greens, which in some areas become shades of grey. Although green is generally considered the colour of hope, for Tenki Hiramatsu it represents the colour of strangeness. While green appears natural outside, we find it rather artificial in the context of painting.

Currently, the artist uses many transparent colours to create an exciting dynamic through the application of the layers. For him, the most interesting mixture consists of green, white and a blackish blue tone. The result becomes greyish, almost washed out and murky, creating a gloomy atmosphere.

But rather than daunting, the images captivate the viewer. A certain intimacy emanates from them, a familiarity, despite the strangeness. Firstly, due to the - sometimes staring and sometimes wandering - glances of the figures. Secondly, through the rather small-format pictures. Tenki Hiramatsu paints on paper and wooden panels in order to work more frequently at the table instead of at the easel. This closeness creates the ambivalent tension between intimacy and strangeness that constitutes the special fascination of Tenki Hiramatsu's work.'

Pia Bendfeld, June 2021

Pia Bendfeld is a writer, artist, curator and editor at PASSE-AVANT. Most recently, she worked as a curatorial assistant at ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe. She is currently studying Curatorial Studies and Philosophy at Städelschule and Goethe-University Frankfurt, and Fine Arts at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf.

Tenki Hiramatsu (born 1986 in Wakayama, Japan) graduated with BA from Nihon University College of Art in Tokyo, Japan in 2009 and studied from 2016 to 2019 with Marcel van Eeden and Daniel Roth at Academy of Fine Arts of Karlsruhe, Germany. Hiramatsu has widely exhibited, with exhibitions including Kunsthalle Basel (2017, group), Kunstverein Rastatt (2019, solo), UNG5, Cologne (2019, solo), Barbara Seiler in Zurich (amongst others in 2019, duo with Sebastian Stöhrer) and Robert Grunenberg, Berlin (2020, solo). He was also included in 'Abstract with Figure', an online group show at James Fuentes in New York in 2020. 'Good Con Man' is Hiramatsu's first show in the UK. He lives and works in Karlsruhe, Germany.

For further information please visit www.claasreiss.com, email info@claasreiss.com or call +44 7769 566 922. Please follow us on @claasreiss and @projektraumlondon. Normal gallery opening hours are Tue to Fri 10am - 6pm, Sat 12:00pm - 6:00pm and by appointment.