

VISIBLE / INVISIBLE 12 May – 6 July 2019

Hopstreet Gallery is pleased to announce the upcoming exhibition, 'Visible/Invisible', featuring the works of six artists. **Joachim Grommek, Marcia Hafif, Matts Leiderstam, Fabrice Souvereyns, Freddy van Parys and Dan Van Severen**, who question the reality of what we see and how we see it. They seek to express the invisible through the visible means of visual art, they never stop to explore a variety of means and techniques to express the Visible/Invisible.

In his geometrical, abstract works, **Joachim Grommek** (°1957 in Wolfsburg, Germany) often refers to art history and artists such as Kasimir Malevich, Piet Mondrian, Blinky Palermo, and Robert Ryman.

His paintings are characterized by the "notion of the authentic forgery" and the interplay of illusion and deception. The artist's basic material is particle board, which he covers first with a white ground, after which he applies a layer of paint that resembles the texture of particle board. Next, he adds precisely painted layers of colored enamel to what is now a deceptively authentic particle board surface that so exactly resemble strips of adhesive tape that one thinks one could pull them right off. Thus, the painting's own materiality becomes the object of painting. Grommek's works requires that the viewer examine them very closely, since they question painting as a medium as well as the status of pictures in general as a sensuous medium of cognition.

The painter **Marcia Hafif** (°1929 Pomona, California, USA, died 2018) is an early representative of Fundamental, or Analytical Painting. In this movement, which emerged simultaneously in the US and Europe in the 1970s, artists strove to find a new approach to painting by concentrating on its concrete, fundamental conditions: color, the application of paint, and the picture support. In the 1980s, this style also become known as Radical Painting (based on the Latin word radices, which means "roots").

Marcia Hafif became one of the most important figures of this movement because of the exceptional quality of her works and the significant theoretical contribution she made to the discourse of painting. In 1972, she began what she still refers to as "The Inventory" in which she collects thoughts, conditions, and decisions regarding the act of painting. For Hafif, the act of painting can be broken down into different categories: materials (color and picture support), size (large, medium, small), format (portrait, landscape, square), tools (paintbrush), and structure, or signature style. Compared to the more restrictive representatives of Radical Paining, Hafif is interested in versatility. To date, she has devoted more than a dozen series to this theme, including "Glaze Paintings," "Black Paintings," "Shade Paintings," and "Wall Paintings."

The panels by **Matts Leiderstam** (°1956 Gothenburg, Sweden) refers to a project started in 2016 when he installed 4 thin shelves around the walls of his studio and then started to make work specifically for these shelves. The aim was to approach the idea and practice of the grid, to explore its influence within abstract painting and its role in our culture so dominated by screens. The paintings are made on poplar wood and can be presented in various ways and different combinations: on shelves, in drawers, hanging on the wall or even standing on a flat surface like a table. The works ask the questions that have always been at the core of his practice – what do paintings do and how do we look at them? When brought together in the exhibition space the works collectively form an image archive, one where the different elements are interchangeable. As the panels are not hung but rather situated in the space they are not merely paintings or objects, they are also manifestations of potential impressions of images – they exist not only in relation to the grid but within the rich history of painting and its multiple meanings.

Fabrice Souvereyns (b.1995 Tongeren, B) designs his own visual language that is midway between concrete identifying marks and a degree of abstraction. Those who take the time to view and read the works attentively, discover through their layers a slowly emerging figuration whereby every millimetre of paper is filled with a monotonous pencil shade (hardness) that stimulates the curiosity of the observer. In his autonomous drawings, Fabrice fills his sheet extensively and fanatically with peculiar figures. Sometimes he erases them just as fanatically, resulting in a membrane of obsessive traces and the drawings begin to look like tattooed skins.

Associations can be made with the jungles of Henri Rousseau - imaginary jungles for which the French painter found inspiration in books and botanical gardens. He claimed that he had seen the jungle in Mexico, but in reality he painted a dream. Sometimes Souvereyns seems to flirt with vegetation patterns from Oriental carpets.

Freddy Van Parys's (°1952 Aalst, B) work is intensely still, far away from the noise, far away from fashion trends, far from yielding to the expectations of aggressive art markets. His art doesn't intend to seduce or to trap the viewer. It does appeal to perceptivity and sensitivity. The means offered have been chosen with care and accuracy. With meticulous care and great love for the métier, for the material quality, he achieved a purely visual language, without degenerating into an exhibition of proficiently seductive technical know-how and competence. No charming decoration, but original creativity.

The abstract oeuvre of **Dan Van Severen** (1927 - 2009) is described with terms like geometric abstraction, formalism or minimalism. His spiritual, meditative, neo-sacral élan is distinctive. A reduction of the form gives rise to intrinsic complexity. Van Severen only retains the essential. By doing so, he makes a radical distinction between form and content. His works have a certain detachment and he severs every relation with the observer and with himself. Simple geometric shapes (square, rectangle, diamond, circle and oval) define his compositions. The interaction of lines and colours that refer to one another, or the relationship between paper, ink, foreground and background result in independent works. The observer can't find a point of departure or an approach to the work. Contextual expectations are not met and projected desires are obstructed. Each work refers to the previous one, resulting in an oeuvre that has a high degree of cohesion. Van Severen's later output can be recognised by the sober, cross-shaped compositions that are the result of life-long research into the square and the rectangle.

His oeuvre evolved through the 1950s and 1960s from expression to essence: from lyrical touches of colour and restrained paintings to virtually colourless lines in 1969. He participated in the Sao Paulo Biennale (1967), Documenta IV (Kassel, 1968) and the Venice Biennale (1970). The Centre for Fine Arts (Brussels) devoted a retrospective to him in 1974, the first in a series of many retrospectives that followed in Ghent, Eindhoven, Amsterdam, Antwerp, and Ostend.