

SCHWARZ CONTEMPORARY

Press Release - June 2011

Ulrich Hakel, *Moonshot*

SCHWARZ CONTEMPORARY is pleased to present new works by Berlin-based artist ULRICH HAKEL.

The exhibition *Moonshot* will be on view at SCHWARZ CONTEMPORARY, Sanderstraße 28, Berlin, until July 30, 2011.

The cardboard works by Ulrich Hakel appear caught between the genres — they are relief, sculpture, and painting at the same time. They furthermore move freely between figuration and abstraction, and also between classical art history and pop culture. Hakel paints with cardboard, and by arranging the planes in space he manages to create sculptural color field paintings that have more than only physical depth. This may remind the viewer of the American *color fields*, of cardboard works by Robert Rauschenberg and Gustav Metzger or of Henri Matisse's late paper cuts — or may bring to mind Graffiti styles or traditional weaving pattern of the Sioux.

The large-sized triptych *School of Athens* conveys the famous example by Raphael already in its title. Hakel translates and abstracts the renaissance fresco into bright color fields. The classical form of the triptych occurs repeatedly in Hakel's work. Another triptych called *Madmen* is reduced in its colors to brown, white, black and gray. Just like a reversible figure, the art historian may read this work as a formalistic homage to the 1960s. A tagger however would rather see frantic styles on the wall of a building or on a train, the seeking viewer will suddenly be gazed at by a face with gigantic eyes and wonder whether there is *really* a polar bear sitting up and begging?! Likewise, the work *Moonshot* — which is also the title of the exhibition — allows broad interpretations. The moon could be found in various spots, also a rocket. Or are we actually looking at the surface of a distant planet? Most probably, all these notions would lead us to nowhere and instead distract us from the actual visual power of Hakel's cardboard paintings.

Ulrich Hakel was born in 1973 and graduated as a student of Olaf Metzel's master class at the art academy in Munich.

He lives and works in Berlin.

The opening at SCHWARZ CONTEMPORARY will take place on Thursday, June 23, 2011, 6 to 8 pm.

For further information or any inquiries please contact the gallery at anytime via mail@schwarz-contemporary.com