

Interview: Anke Weyer about that “constant crisis management” called painting, Conceptual Fine Arts, September 2015

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Anke Weyer, ASAP Already, 2015 ; Oil and acrylic on canvas, 203, 2 x 170, 2 cm



Anke Weyer, Emulsified, 2015 ; Oil and acrylic on canvas, 213,4 x 167,6 cm

Along with the contemporary art fair taking place in April, the Brussels gallery weekend in September is with no doubt the most important yearly celebration of the city’s art world branch. Started off with only a number of the galleries opening the season at the same time, Brussels Art Days (this being the name of the event) has grown in size – now including conferences, curated programs and non-for-profit art spaces.

It is for this occasion that we reached Anke Weyer, an emerging artist based in New York whose paintings will be on show through November 7th at Office Baroque, one of the leading galleries in town. Moved by our fascination for her abstract compositions of oil and acrylic paint, for the way they seem to embody both self-conscious traces (or expressionism) and the disappearance of those very marks, we asked her a few questions just before the opening of her show.

This is your first solo show in Europe, do you have any expectation on how the public will react to your art here compared to the response you normally get in the US?

I do not anticipate any particular emotion or response. On the contrary, I hope the works leave room for any possible interpretation. Showing a painting is rather like throwing my contribution into a dialogue than stating an aphorism.

The title of the exhibition (Two Islands Are Better Than One) has this very romantic and sentimental overtone

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while some of the paintings are called with more mundane expressions like “ASAP already”. Can you tell us how you come up with your titles?

When I give titles I sometimes use fragments of expressions that have an already established meaning like abbreviations or proverbs and take them out of their original context to give them a new meaning, which should remain ambiguous and rather accompany what is visible on the painting than describing it.

In a previous interview you said it was hard to just enjoy painting while you were studying in Frankfurt and that that struggle ultimately went into the canvas. Do you still find yourself in bad terms with painting sometimes? If so, does this artistic conflict take form in forms other than the canvas?

I think painting is a constant crisis management, I can't stand it when a painting looks as if its just a past time. It is serious work and comes loaded with so much history and responsibility, which is what makes it so interesting.

Do you ever picture your paintings outside the white cube? Perhaps next to the work of another contemporary artist or old master you really appreciate?

I have to admit that I do enjoy seeing the work taken out of my personal space and on a white wall. Whatever the environment is, it always effects the perception of a viewer even or maybe especially in a white cube. Something interesting happens there because you get confronted with how you feel when you stand alone in front of a painting. But also, with painting in particular, there are not so many options of how to present it, the material is simply too fragile to show anywhere else than a room that is designated to this purpose.

From modernism and abstract expressionism to post-modernism, some generic art historical terms can be mentioned to describe your practice. We'd rather ask if you feel any sense of belonging to a contemporary artistic current? Or perhaps a specific scene in New York City, the city where you live?

It would be pretentious of me to say that I am part of a scene.

What are your plans after the exhibition at Office Baroque?

Holiday!