

NINO MIER GALLERY

An abstract painting by Michael Bauer, featuring a complex composition of overlapping shapes and colors. The palette is dominated by warm tones like yellow, orange, and red, contrasted with cooler blues, greens, and purples. The style is expressive and gestural, with visible brushstrokes and a sense of movement. The overall effect is one of vibrant energy and emotional intensity.

LOS ANGELES | BRUSSELS | NEW YORK | MARFA

MICHAEL BAUER

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BIOGRAPHY

MICHAEL BAUER

b. 1973, Erkelenz, DE
Lives and works in New York, NY, US



The amorphic, animalistic forms of German painter Michael Bauer are built upon color washes, meandering lines, and bulbous protrusions. Utilizing a variety of rendering techniques and materials, including pointillism, text and high-chroma colors, Bauer transforms his free-form compositions into dynamic and ornamented abstractions. He borrows from the colorful tradition of Modernist composition, juxtaposing collaged cutouts with a bevy of 20th century painting methodologies—including Cubist, Pop, and Surrealist techniques—to make the swirling paintings he's become known for. Says Bauer of his process, "I will say, especially in paintings, there is always a figurative sense behind it. I look at figures and I look at inventions of figures. But then of course once you paint, it jumps back and forth between something that could be a landscape but is also certain color arrangements. So you're constantly changing back in the way you look at it and in the way you work. It goes both ways."

Michael Bauer (b. 1973, Erkelenz, DE; lives and works in New York, NY, US) studied at the Hochschule für Bildende Kunst in Braunschweig. Notable exhibitions include *Men in Pain (Pool Party)* at Norma Mangione (2016); *Michael Bauer: Butter Beboop (Transatlantic Creme Dreams)*, Alison Jacques Gallery, London (2015); *Creme Wars – Snoopie*, Lisa Cooley Gallery, New York (2014); *Slow Future – H.S.O.P. – Opus*, Alison Jacques Gallery, London (2013); *K-Hole (Frogs)*, Villa Merkel, Esslingen am Neckar (2011); *Marquis Dance Hall*, Istanbul (2010); *Anthem*, Kunsthhaus Baselland, Basel (2009); and *Kunstverein Bonn*, Bonn (2007). Bauer is the subject of a substantial JRP Ringier monograph published in 2008, entitled *Borwasser*, and with a lead essay by Jennifer Higgie and an interview with Stefanie Popp. Bauer's work is part of the Saatchi Collection, London and the Zabłudowicz Collection, London. The artist lives and works in New York.



SAMPLE WORKS

**sample selection does not reflect current availability*



Green Woman, Two Moons (Return to Ether Shelter), 2022, oil, acrylic, and pastels on canvas, 87 1/8 x 96 7/8 in (framed), (MBA22.012)

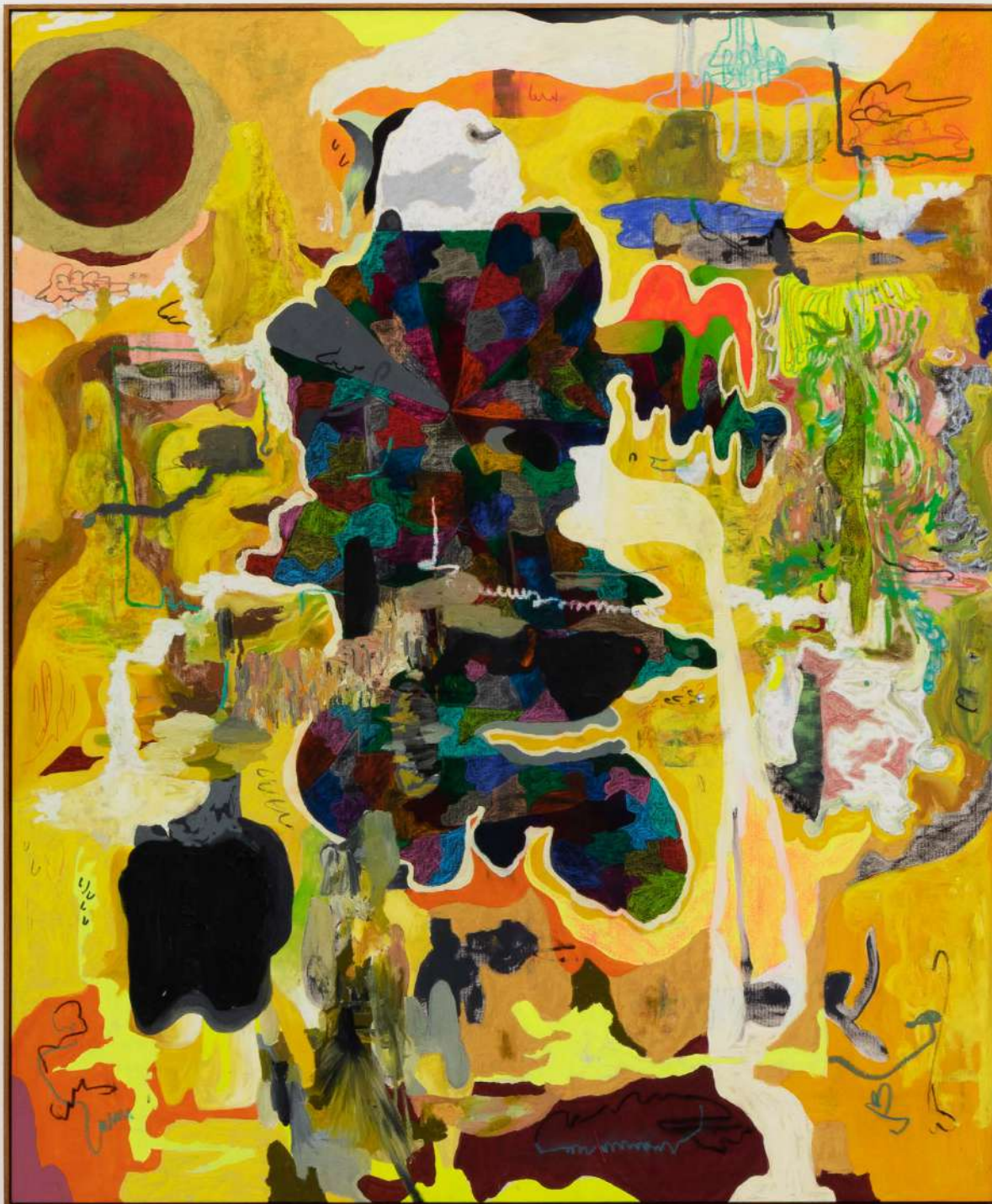


*Yellow Moon and
Moss-Family Gathering, 2022*
Oil, acrylic, and pastels on canvas
76 3/4 x 74 1/8 in (framed)
195 x 188 cm (framed)
(MBA22.006)

Ether Cave, Green Woman and Moon, 2020, oil, crayon, pastel, and acrylic on canvas, 96 x 120 in, 243.8 x 304.8 cm, (MBA20.005)



Barbarian Knowledge, 2020
Oil, crayon, pastel, and acrylic on canvas
73 x 60 in
185.4 x 152.4 cm
(MBA20.010)







Two Psykers, Grey Aunt mirrored and Space Offerings, 2021

Oil, crayon, pastel, and acrylic on canvas

65 3/4 x 107 1/2 in (framed)

167 x 273 cm (framed)

(MBA22.002)



Victory Garden and Aunts, 2020
Oil, crayon, pastel, and acrylic on canvas
61 x 73 in
154.9 x 185.4 cm
(MBA20.009)



Red Cave and Blonde, 2019
Oil, crayon, pastel, and acrylic on canvas
73 x 61 in
185.4 x 154.9 cm
(MB19.010)





Mud Cave and White Moon, 2019
Oil, crayon, pastel, and acrylic on canvas
71 x 60 in
180.3 x 152.4 cm
(MB19.019)



Blue Cave and Moon, 2019
Oil, crayon, pastel, and acrylic on canvas
73 x 61 in
185.4 x 154.9 cm
(MB19.005)





**SELECTED EXHIBITONS
AND PROJECTS**

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS AND PROJECTS

RETURN TO ETHER SHELTER

2022

NINO MIER GALLERY
BRUSSELS, BE

VISIONS 2019 - 2021: MICHAEL BAUER AND RAYNES BIRKBECK

2021 - 2022

NORMA MANGIONE GALLERY
TORINO, IT

CAVES AND GARDENS

2020

NINO MIER GALLERY
LOS ANGELES, CA, US

RETURN TO ETHER SHELTER

2022
NINO MIER GALLERY
BRUSSELS, BE

This group of paintings develops the artist's interest in the synesthetic landscape, a genre he has been working in for the past four years. The eleven new oil, crayon, pastel, and acrylic paintings on canvas in *Return to Ether Shelter* free the landscape mode from the organizing principle of sight, presenting instead worlds of rapturous, sensory psychedelia.

Return to Ether Shelter comprises a series of entanglements: entanglements of form; and entanglements of body and environment. Bauer's dissonant compositions do not guide the eye throughout their surfaces or produce illusionistic spaces that viewers might project themselves into. Nor do they necessarily resist us. Instead, they evoke sensation as a musical composition might, offering a sensuous array of texture, line, pattern, and form rendered in a kaleidoscopic panoply of colors. In a way, our whole bodies come into contact with Bauer's paintings. Such omnipresence recalls archaic theories of ether, or aether, which was a substance understood in the Middle Ages to saturate everything in our atmosphere.

The inclusion of a moon within each composition clearly situates the canvases as landscapes. In *Land of Tiny Hands (Return to Ether Shelter)*, the moon vibrates with a rainbow of striations resembling soundwaves. In *Back to Ether Cave (Hidden Aunt)*, the moon is a pale grey, shaded in areas like a weathered, old dime. And in *Exhale (Ether-Mother)*, a blood moon hangs high in the sky. The moons – which all, in their own way, seem to distort the painted matter around them with their gravitational pull – are the only real coordinate point viewers can orient themselves to within Bauer's landscapes. Around them, forms swelter, swirl, and pulsate. The affective charge of Bauer's clamorous environments seem to overwhelm the attempt to represent them in sensible form. What's left is a synesthetic funneling of sensory data into the visual realm.

Bauer's prior work in this series situated the viewer inside a cave, looking out. But barring the moons, the work in *Return to Ether Shelter* eschews visual organization entirely for the felt experience. As e.e. cummings put it, "since feeling is first / who pays any attention / to the syntax of things". Feeling is first, indeed: when discussing the series, Bauer returns time and again to descriptions of various atmospheric registers, like temperature, quality of air, and other sonic, emotional, or tactile experiences. More pertinent to Bauer are not questions about where, in a field, a tree grows, but whether the field is muggy or dry. He represents such visceral observations not through figural traces of their presence (a leafless tree, say, indicating the dry chill of winter), but through associative abstraction. Viewers are left to draw their own conclusions about where they are and how they feel within it.













VISIONS 2019 - 2021: MICHAEL BAUER AND RAYNES BIRKBECK

2021 - 2022
NORMA MANGIONE GALLERY
TORINO, IT

Norma Mangione Gallery is pleased to present Visions 2019 - 2021, the exhibition of collaborative works by Michael Bauer and Raynes Birkbeck. Michael Bauer and Raynes Birkbeck met a few years ago in New York and in 2019 they began to collaborate, painting and drawing together on paper. These chains of pictorial reactions lead to fantastical storytelling about dinosaur pets, angry planets, russian girlfriends, Elton John, turtle monuments, testicle machines, rituals, space wars and orgies. A new mythology of inventions that mixes sacred and profane, politics and religion, sexuality and visionarity.

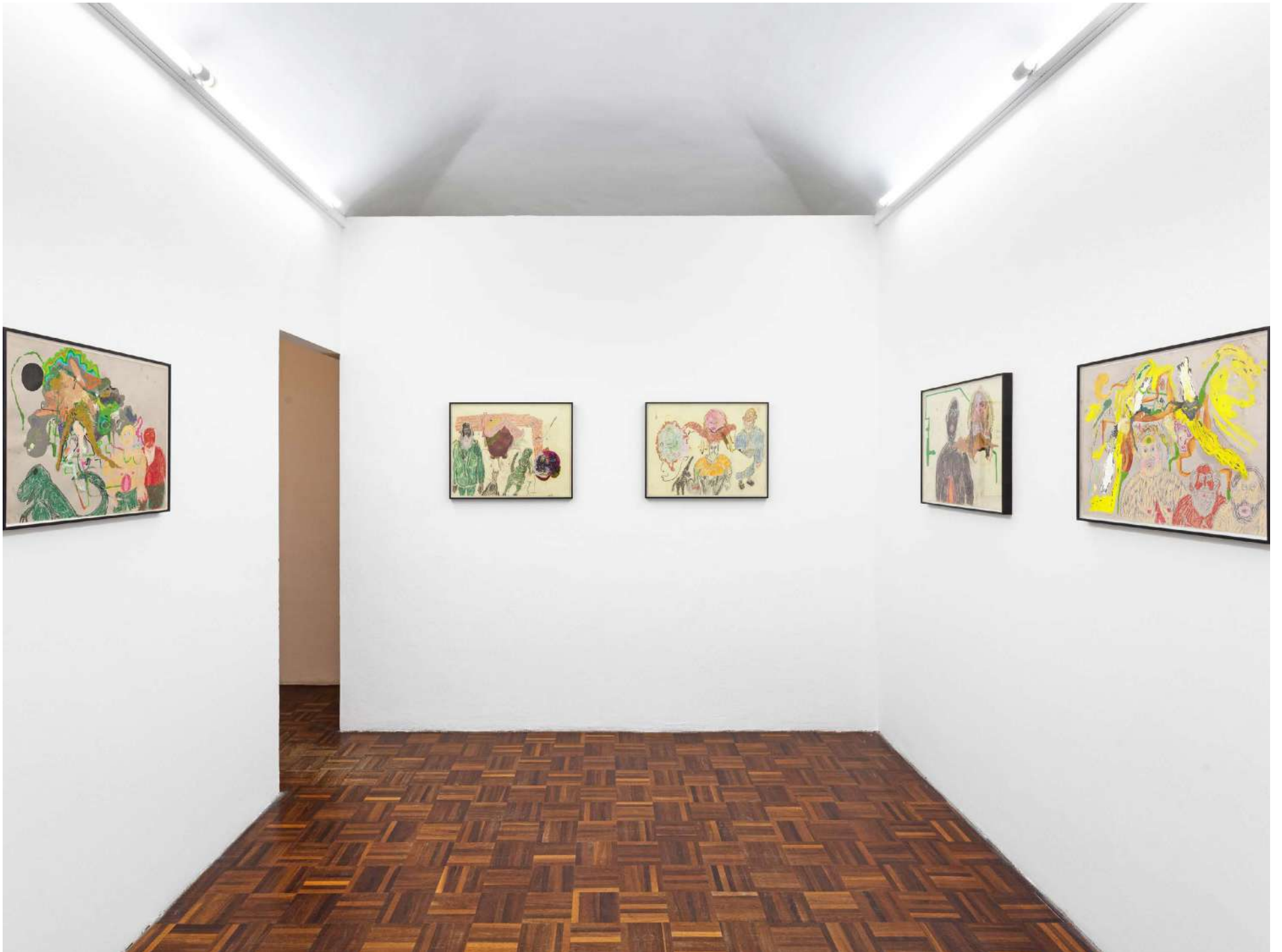
Images courtesy of Norma Mangione Gallery and the artists











CAVES AND GARDENS

2020
NINO MIER GALLERY
LOS ANGELES, CA, US

"Michael called me once to tell me his definition of painting:

"Unaufgeregte Extase" - unagitated ecstasy.

Isn't that what yogis call Samadhi?
A state of bliss that can be obtained
not by fleeing the chaos surrounding us
but rather by setting our gaze inward in the thick of it,
diving into our own darkness, open hearted,

profoundly connected to the myriads of beings and things,
but untouched in our deepest core by the waves and percussions
and repercussions they emit.

I can't find a color that is not in these paintings
(bundle them all together and you'll probably get a perfect white),
their fluorescent sensuality shouting EUPHORIA!!
while the surrounding sludge is muttering tranquilito, tranquilito -
the scenes they put into shape together dissolving into something between battle
and embrace.

All the clutter and confusion and nonsense of the world is in balance
(fragile, but in balance still),
watched over by benign powers
(some are visible, others hidden, even occult).

Uncle, aunt - props out of everyone's life, if important or completely irrelevant,
doesn't matter - they stand by.
Caves! Fetal hideouts, but gem-stacked and dizzying in their synchronicity, like
time lapses of fever dreams.

The MOON -
deprived of his waxing and waning, he is always FULL,
even more present as a force than an attribute
(a clock without hands) -
patiently reflecting with an undiminishable grace
whatever preposterousness or monstrosity is going on underneath

in this xeric psychedelia.
Might be a bad trip at times but someone is definitely holding our hand,



helping us face both friendly fellas and the ever
transforming orcs and ogres,
guiding us from cave to cave and garden to garden,
gentle sanctuaries where we can rest and restore,
before we step into the next world within worlds,
moonstruck, to find our proximate opponent, or dancing
partner, or some half-creature that'll accompany us for
a few steps, as we set our eyes on the radiating path
that meanders through it all,

knowing it's going to be fine."

Stefanie Popp
Köln, Februar 2020









SELECTED PRESS

SELECTED PRESS

MOUSSE

OCTOBER 2020

BY ALASTAIR MACKINVEN

ART IN AMERICA

SEPTEMBER 2014

BY BECKY BROWN

ARTNET NEWS

MAY 2014

BY BEN SUTTON

COOL HUNTING

MAY 2012

BY PERRIN DRUMM

SAATCHI ART

MAY 2009

BY STEPHANIE POPP

MOUSSE

OCTOBER 2020

This Text Is About Michael Bauer's Paintings

By Alastair MacKinven



Michael Bauer, *Metacaves* 1973, at Lyles & King, New York, 2020

Some years ago I was living in Greenwich, South London. It is similar to every square inch of this island in that it is contaminated with a thick layer of history; Greenwich's legacy is naval. The Royal Observatory sits on top of a hill in Greenwich Park where engraved plaques draw attention to Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), "This Is Where Time Begins" reads an inscription next to a bronze line inlaid in the ground at 0° longitude.

At some point an artist received a grant to install a permanent public artwork at this site: a laser housed in a turret in the observatory draws the zero point of time through the night sky. On my nightly walks I would look up and see the green laser light, reminding me of GMT, mapping my location, causing my mind to imagine the flotillas that set sail from this island knowing their location by adopting standardised time. Without fail each night seeing it anew I would curse and rage about this public artwork! My over-reaction is funny to me now but at the time seeing that laser felt like being woken by a cruel prison warden.

I no longer remember the date but it was approaching mid-summer when I enacted my petty revenge on this site. I waited till the sun disappeared and climbed the wall that encircled Greenwich Park. I made my way to the base of the observatory, unpacked my supplies: sections of bamboo poles, duct tape, and a mirror. I fitted the bamboo poles together, taped the mirror to the top and used this precarious tool to divert the path of the laser. For five seconds I shifted time, removed a reference point, freeing us from the clock's organisational tyranny before I dropped everything and sprinted from security.

Replying to an art worker's polite question, "Did you have a nice weekend?" I recount my adventure of moving time to which they inquired if I knew of Joseph Conrad's book *The Secret Agent*. "Uh, no" I replied but thought, "I moved fucking time this weekend, why do you want to tell me about some asshole who wrote a book, what did you do this weekend, mate!? Read!" They went on to tell me the novel immortalised the real life events leading up to the death of Martial Bourdin, an anarchist who in 1894 accidentally blew himself up when the bomb he was carrying prematurely exploded before he reached his target, Greenwich Observatory. Dutifully I bought the book, read 10 pages before throwing it in the rubbish bin feeling overrun with self-loathing, what was I doing? Research? Intellectualising an impulse? Reverse engineering a historical context? Rationalising my rancour against time and reference points? Planning to write a press release? I did know that reading the novel would neuter my irrational pathetic gesture and doing the research would have been akin to setting sail with my watch calibrated to GMT whereas my desire was more like dropping a tab of acid, stealing a motorboat with the intention of catching up with the Moon.

But what of the lone sailor in the middle of the Atlantic during those five seconds that I, in South London removed their connection to their relationary understanding of place*, of their place. Adrift with no objects to locate their self in relationship to, the seascape changing constantly, not one fixed point, no ground beneath their feet from which to start mapping outwards. In these specific conditions, these glorious conditions, it is possible to experience a special feeling, a horror vacui**. A deterritorialisation that only leads inward.

The horror...

The sound of a toilet flushes, it comes from behind you, your index fingers are pulling your bottom eyelids gently down as you see yourself looking back from the mirror staring into the black holes of your pupils the size of plates. This is not the middle of the Atlantic... it is a dirty basement loo, Club Hotsy Totsy? Braunschweig? Yes, Hotsy Totsy, Bruanschweig.

You see the horror vacui of the sailor are kicks for some. They pay good money for those kicks! To stand silent with yer mouth agog, spittle gathering between bottom lip and teeth, pooling, the meniscus breaks, a long string forms, gravity pulls it down, plip, the dribble hits the gallery's polished concrete floor. Everything under heaven is in utter chaos, the situation is excellent***. Plip, plip.

* Yeah I know.

** I realise that.

*** Yes, in bad taste.

Art in America

SEPTEMBER 2014

Michael Bauer

By Becky Brown



Michael Bauer: *Creme Wars-Snoopie*, 2014, oil on canvas, 88 by 127 inches; at Lisa Cooley.

All the paintings in Michael Bauer's second solo exhibition at Lisa Cooley have a similar composition: a central mass of miscellaneous marks and symbols that scatters like shrapnel toward the edges. The 11-foot-wide *Creme Wars—Snoopie* (2014), the show's title work, suggests a form of contemporary history painting. The buff-colored ground is packed with distorted body parts (often hyperactive fingers), floating geometric slabs, ghostly nebulae and oozing drips. Viewers may feast on a full spectrum of colors (from toxic neon green and rich orange to gray and sepia tones) as well as techniques (from broad gesture to intricate detailing, from wet-on-wet impasto to delicate wash). Bodies sometimes cohere in the manner of a Surrealist exquisite corpse, but often stray hands, heads and crotches are lodged in the swarm or tacked on in the margins.

Lines, zigzags and squiggles that feel more like drawing than painting often function as a fade-out, resembling the flicker of melody or bare bass line which gradually transitions a "wall of sound" into silence. At their centers, these canvases are a visual equivalent to Phil Spector's self-proclaimed Wagnerian vision: layering and juxtaposing many styles of painting into high-impact symphonies that build harmony through difference.

A series of screen prints, *Baba vs Seger 1-11* (2013-14), offered a contrast to the paintings in terms of scale (each 22½ by 30 inches or vice versa) and palette (black ink on cream paper). Images that clearly pit one entity against another stand out: in *Baba vs Seger 8*, a constellation of shapes on the left (a UFO landing? an invasion of tents?) confronts the bottom half of a man on the right, encroaching threateningly onto his side of the sheet. Yet the conflict between American "heartland rock" icon Bob Seger and the mysterious Baba resists

high-minded analysis. Rather, pop culture allusions flow through the series as detached signifiers, creating an absurdist stream of consciousness that ranges from familiar (if slightly off) references to nonsense.

Consider the exhibition title, *Creme Wars—Snoopie*, selected because Bauer thought the words sounded funny together. One learned from the press release that “Snoopie” is the name of a skinhead who once beat up the artist in his native Germany. But American viewers were inevitably reminded of *Snoopy*, dynamic beagle of Peanuts fame, who could be considered a kind of backstage champion here, invoked only through the loaded coincidences typical of Bauer’s work. The use of “creme” in each painting title in meaningless combinations—*Fleetwood Mac (Creme)*, *Sops-Bar (Anti-Creme)*—recalls the Dada Manifesto’s word pileups, which leveled the importance of sound and meaning. As its author, Hugo Ball, explained: “It’s a question of connections, and of loosening them up a bit to start with.” Loosened from their cultural moorings, Bauer’s depictions of hot dogs, cartoon pianos and sandwiches hover alongside abstract marks.

The press release declares Bauer an alternative to a trend of painters who “abandon composition in favor of casual gestures or endgame conceptual processes.” Indeed, his lush vocabulary is a far cry from so-called Zombie Formalism. Instead of repeating a one-shot stunt to generate paintings in the model of mass production, he builds a complex visual language that follows the logic of a successful road trip: the right combination of planning and intuition. Each painting offers the freedom to chart one’s own perceptual course, in which spontaneous detours and surprise encounters yield the best results.

MAY 2014

New York Gallery Beat: 6 Critics Review 16 Shows

Spring exhibitions from Hanna Liden, Sterling Ruby, and other artists.

By Ben Sutton



Michael Bauer, *Fleetwood Mac (Creme)* (2014).
Photo: Benjamin Sutton.

Michael Bauer, Lisa Cooley Gallery, 107 Norfolk Street, closes June 22

All of modern painting seems to be contained in the clusters of scribbles, swaths of impastoed oil, half-finished figures, Pop art foodstuffs, and squiggly stray limbs that float around the center of each of Bauer's paintings. René Magritte and Sue Williams seem especially prominent in the German-born, New York-based artist's constellation of influences in these new pieces, which are among his biggest and funniest to date. There are, for instance, the floating pipes and bowler hat in *Rickter-Bar (Anti-Creme)* (2014) that evoke the Belgian Surrealist, as well as the innumerable suggestive appendages in curly, cartoon-like lines populating each painting, reminding one of Williams's orgiastic compositions. And those are just two major nodes on the web of allusions stretching across these immensely satisfying new paintings—which make the accompanying prints feel all the more thin.

COOL HUNTING

MAY 2012

Michael Bauer

A mad tea party of paintings

By Perrin Drumm



Courtesy of the artist

Initially catching our eye at the recent NADA NYC fair, Michael Bauer has made an impression in the European art market for years with his energetically moody compositions. The German artist recently set up shop in New York, and in celebration of his move from Berlin to NYC he is holding his first solo show at Lisa Cooley Gallery, dubbed *H.S.O.P. – 1973*.

Bauer spent much of 2012 experimenting with collage and drawing, a practice that has invigorated his new paintings with what the gallery calls an “openness, dynamism, lightness and mischievous humor” not seen in his previous work. Still, certain elements from his early career remain, most notably his small, meticulous markings and his predilection for highlighting and obscuring physical deformity. According to the Saatchi Gallery, “Bauer uses the qualities of abstract painting as a deviation of representational portraiture, allowing the media to replicate the characteristics of physical matter.”

Even as his compositions become tighter and more centralized, Bauer seems consumed with making figurative elements from the marking of his medium. He describes the work in *H.S.O.P – 1973* as “portraits of gangs, families, music bands, collectives, or mobs—a grouping of characters revealed through the occasional eye or profile emerging from shadowy abstraction. Flat, crisp, bright, patterns usually provide the structure from which these organic nebulas originate.”

The title for the exhibition is a little obscure, and Bauer calls *H.S.O.P.* an “arbitrary reference” to the Hudson River School of painting, and because there’s a foot or foot-like shape in each painting, the accompanying numbers indicate European shoe sizes.

The other elements aren’t quite so random. Bauer adds circular shapes to the corners to make them more like playing cards, with each painting like a “character in an unfolding cast, a mad tea party of sorts.”

MARCH 2009

Michael Bauer in Conversation with Stephanie Popp

By Stephanie Popp

To coincide with an exhibition at the newly relocated Hotel gallery in London, the German artist Michael Bauer talks here with fellow artist and writer Stefanie Popp. Bauer was born in 1973 and lives and works in Cologne. His current exhibition brings together sculptural works and paintings which Rebecca Gelard in her recent review on Saatchi Online described as : "tribal and vital, their compromised physicality appearing as if partially crafted out of the spare drips wiped from the edge of history's dipping pot. It's not really people that spring to mind when taking them in, rather the temporary stains and psychological debris they pollute places with."

Michael Bauer's work creates figurative composites from abstraction and design. Grotesque and distorted conglomerations of doodled elements, grey and muddy forms entangle as abject viscera; lumpy scar tissue, withering penises, and slithery dead matter converge as psychological landscape, and forlorn memento mori. Traces of recognizable features, such as eyes and hands, give uneasy relation to celiac smears, scabby encrustations, and fluid brush marks, each rendered with a pristine delicacy. Offset by harlequin ornamentation and elegant touches of primavera color, Bauer's reductive palette creates an antiquarian reverence, setting his absurd conceptions as icons of protracted contemplation.

STEPHANIE POPP: Do you know the tanuki statues that are often placed in or outside Japanese restaurants? They show the tanuki- the Japanese racoon dog- as a fat-bellied comic figure iwth a leaf or straw hat on its head, an empty sake bottle in one hand, and an IOU in the other (a debt that's never paid, because the tanuki is a highly frivolous, throughly mischievous creature, like a clumsy, bizarre brother of the clever fox)/ Moreover, and this is where it gets interesting, the tanuki has huge testicles that hang down to the ground. In earlier representations they are even used as drums or thrown over the animal's shoulders like a rucksack. As well as being extremely cute (as silly and jolly as it is gullible and absent-minded), the tanuki can expand its scrotum to huge dimensions and putit to a wide range of uses- as a blanket or cushion on which it curls up for a nap, or as an umbrella, a boat, a room, whatever happens to be needed.

MICHAEL BAUER: That's a wonderful image. There are also pictures of a tanuki using its balls as a parachute. I like that. In my paintings, testicles- or sex organis in general- are never functional in a seal sense. They're more like objects that have somehow been attached.

SP: Although the genitals in your paintings are identifiable as such, they don't correspond directly. They have a soft, amorphous quality, appearing rather formless and mutable. All in all, these lumpy, fleshy objects could be something like a versatile, unfixed counter-model to teh phallic symbol. Or better still: a comment on and completment to it. Nicely playful and bizarre, versatile and mutable, like tanuki testicles.

MB: Yes. I think the phalli, especially in the 'Pol' series, are rather sad appendages, robbed of their actual function. Like a last, sad gesture of potency. In that respect, htey are a kind of reluctant counter-model. There's nothing scary about them, more easy-going, like your tanuki, as there's no longer a threat of penetration. It's more akin to waving. As if to briefly draw attention to something, a reminder it once existed. Only then to flop back down on the bed. The image of a tanuki sleeping on its own outspread scrotum really appeals to me.

SP: Yes, I thought you'd like it. Something like the principle of panda versus grizzly bear. But this waving takes place in the knowledge of the amssive baggage of the phallic symbol. What's nice about it is the multitude of possible associations, especially with a symbol that's so semantically one-dimensional. Or at best two-dimensional - for Lacan at least, the phallus is a dialectic symbol, since it unites the sublime of procreation with the profane of urination. So it's nice to be able to adda few more possibilities. In any case, we gallop right down the well-worn paths of cultural history, passing early stone sculptures and the giant members of ancient

Greece, smiling at cravats, swords, and rockets, never leaving the realm of Freud, the Surrealists, Lacan, Klaus Theweleit..

MB: For me, these forms are also quite simply beautiful in painterly terms. One shouldn't forget that abstract form also plays a part. Added to which, all the associations linked with them are intended. One must be careful not to fall into these traps too often. It has to remain dynamic. And if these images are called to mind, I think the picture remains in such a dynamic state. But it is true, the physical sensations in my paintings are in a state of transformation. They can be taken further. Although there are some that are more in a state of falling asleep. The matter is already closed. I'm also thinking here of film trailers, what happens in your head, developing an idea of the whole film when you only know fragments.

SP: Klaus Theweleit associates all that flows and all that mingles with the unconscious. For the military man (about whom Theweleit is writing in 'Male Fantasies'), rivers, floods, mire, pulp - all states that recur constantly in the pictorial world of your painting, both in terms of content and motif, and in formal and technical terms- present a threat on all kinds of levels: fluidity is equated with "the greater malleability and as yet unspent utopian potential of femaleness, a desiring-production that is fallow, undirected, not yet socially defined, and thus remains in closer proximity to the unconscious; a life of emotion, rather than intellect (that cruel, demarcating product of the constraints that beset men's bodies)..." The same applies to the floods inside the body; individuals experience their own innards as nothing but a heavy mass, as pulp. Which somehow brings us to the "mob" that often crops up in your titles.

MB: Initially, M.O.B. was meant to be a title or designation of rank. Like in an army. The idea was that these figures are representatives of a collective or group.

SP: That would be quite an army of freaks. A bit like in movies about mercenaries. But doesn't the title also contain the idea of a group, a crowd, a riotous assembly, a mob? After all, there's far more going on within your figures than just juxtaposition- there's superposition, muddle, and confusion, there's clearly an element of tumult and turmoil.

MB: In more recent works, that has changed somewhat. The figurations are now slightly simpler, more blatant. But of course you're right that the mob in the title makes these figures multiple. And this tumult, as you call it, takes place within the figure. The figure is legion, so to speak. Like Satan, who always says "I am many."



Keijzers Koning

SP: Right. And God says "I am what I am." You can't really argue with that.

MB: A hundred-member progressive rock band. An absurd musical collective. Or a sect. Something like Yahowa 13, with their leader Father Yod, who made music and recorded albums. That's a lovely and extremely touching idea, this unshakeable belief in the collective. We'll make love together, mathematically, and then music, sexually. Or we'll spend five years working on an album about the moon. The nice thing about such collectives is this urge to invent. To generate all manner of absurd concepts. That comes quite close to the way I approach painting. All my works are claims, too. Paintelery inventions Father Yod even invented planets. That's fabulous, that kind of artificiality. Cutting oneself off and deliberately withdrawing in order to see what else there is. I appreciate that. I think that's where some of the best things happen.

SP: Another interesting thing about Yahowa 13 is the mixing. Not the mixing of oriental philosophy, New Age, Christianity, plus a bit of yoga, and Ra from the ancient Egyptians, etcetera, that's nothing new. But the fact that this happened in the middle of Hollywood. They all lived together in a huge villa in the Hollywood Hills and ran a successful vegetarian restaurant that was very popular with pop stars and actors. Also, untypically for a sect, the music is entirely in keeping with its time and place- California in the 1970s. Not just the obligatory mantras, but developing out of and contributing to western (psychedelic) pop. Not a turning away from reality, then, but more an embracing of it. Reality is transferred into a particular context and transformed, supplemented and perfected with distinctive and peculiar elements. Yahowa 13 were also very theatrical, and it seems they were all involved, which is nice, as the more usual version is that followers are exploited as props for the gurus own self-presentation.

MB: It's also nice that this spectacle ended not with collective suicide but in a perfectly modern manner when Father Yod died hang-gliding. That rounds the picture off very well. That was strange, that picture of the over-adorned Bulgarian bride you sent me. And diabolically sad, too. In this case, it's an almost violent act. The bride is barely recognizeable, she's been turned into a gigantic bouquet of flowers. She becomes a sculpture. Decorated to death, so to speak. Which is also something I've often done with my figures. All you see is an eye or a tooth or some other thing that suggest is a face. And I always tell myself that this is a nice trap. If there's an eye, the picture of a figure immediately comes to mind. Which is wonderfully simple and stupid. I once quite dumbly included clocks in some pictures- a totally overloaded symbol, mostly topped by a Napoleon hat. And then someone actually wrote something about time passing and life slipping past. That was great. I was thinking more about the silliest way of getting the concept of time into a picture. You paint a clock. Added to which, it was a bit like Flavor Flav's clock, the giant one he always wears around his neck.

SP: Ah, Flavor Flav! He too has now become a tragicomic figure. In the MTV program 'Flavor of Love', he selects a bride from a group of exquisitely fucked-up, crazy women. Every week, one gets sent home: "Your time is up." And if you make it to teh next round: "You know what time it is, baby." And the women get the huge clocks hung round their necks, like teh cheap gold chains they awarded on 'Bachelor'. That's a similar approach to symbolism as what you're describing. Now there's also 'Rock of Love' with Bret Michaels from Poison. The same thing, just with rock bitches instead of ghetto bitches. And teh doorway to teh next round was: "Will you stay and rock my world?" I like to watch that. In a sense, what goes on there is like school summer camp. Totally staged and planned, of course- tumult and rivalry and cabin fever are expected and provoked. But in any case, it's certainly another example of a mob.

MB: And it's strange how a symbol like this, which Public Enemy initially used in a very political sense, nothing to do with bling, suddenly changes. If you look at a scene like this, you notice that the image has actually frozen at the moment when the rose or the chain or the clock is presented. And Flavor Flav or Brett Michaels becomes a sculpture. With a gesture that goes nowhere. This ritual of giving an award. Something similar happens iwth my sculptures. 'DJ Penize', for example, consists of three plinths. The first plinth supports the figure, the figure is the plingth for the pen, and the pen is the plinth for the contact details of my accountant. And these details are what is presented. It's as if the sculpture were handing over a rose with the words "will you stay and rock my world"- it's the same pattern, I'd say. At the end of the ritual lies disappointment.

SP: The many borders and frames in your pictures also function like plinths. They seem to point again and again to the fact that these are pictures. As if they were insisting on their own artificiality.

MB: Yes. Also the crossing out in the new pictures with the green blackboard paint. The good thing about this is that it reclaims the picture for painting, away from illusionism and towards a flyer or poster. Towards abstraction, then, and away from storytelling. The pictures are meant to jump back and forth between these two poles. This

generates movement. Looking at these pictures now I'm also reminded of the scene in 'The Omen' where the photographer discovers the light effects in his pictures, harbingers of a fiendish accident; the priest, who is later impaled on a church steeple. I like it when such images occur to me belatedly. There is an anecdote about Baselitz showing a gallerist new works that all had a very particular pattern. And the gallerist was in his studio and noticed some Italian matchboxes and said: "Oh I see, you're painting Italian matchboxes." I like that. Things that are lying at your feet the whole time. You just don't notice how certain things find their way into your pictures. It's rather a stupid feeling. But that can only be good. One should accept it all, this unconscious material. It's something you can usually trust. And it joins everything else in the whole baggage of painting- which is already brimming over, and that can become a problem.

SP: What I see in your work above all is that you devise highly distinctive pictorial worlds and let them develop their own inner tension. By which I mean that within the picture, the hat might make fun of the penis, or vice versa, instead of you as the artist imposing your view on us. You create your own system and trust it to explain itself on its own terms. Or not, as the case may be.

MB: It's fine for the picture to talk to itself, to keep rummaging through itself, like a washing machine.

SP: Flavor Flav's clocks, fantasy sex organs, decorated with little hats and feathers and flooded by pulp, diligently colored-in patterns next to areas of paint applied with great gusto whose elegance and sensuality are derived entirely from their materiality: all this taken together is a flexible system, things get mixed up – the profane with the sublime, the familiar with the totally strange, going so far that such distinctions are no longer identifiable. It's like an alchemical balancing act. And all the rummaging and recycling is never the point of departure or the driving force, but always a supplement and complement to what you've invented yourself. What I also see in your work is real celebration of enjoyment, elegance, and sensuality. And of the sexiness of the materiality of paint, although without relying on this exclusively, without expecting that to 'work' on its own. The result is an extravagant beauty that embraces deformation and leans in all directions, overflowing into the ridiculous, the grotesque, the tragic, like your sculptures overflowing their plinths. Or like the Bulgarian bride.

MB: Yes, that is all welcome in the picture. And the pathos that's always there as soon as one starts doing painting. The soft clock, the lonely painter, the severed ear, etcetera. All of which is great material. As well as this sometimes really peculiar feeling of being a painter when one is struggling through ornaments. Work in the studio in general. As if I was mixing my own paint with egg whites and rabbit- skin glue. Like at the academy I attended, in some of the painting classes. People who spent two months painting a damn vase or an old horse. Layer on layer, with tired eyes and candlelight in front of the easel. Until late at night. Always in the knowledge that: yes, I am a painter. And then, the next day, the professor came and declared in a grouchy voice: "No! You not a painter yet! Not yet!" I found this pathos very sad, but also very entertaining. There they all were, up in the attic, painting themselves literally crazy. And I don't want to say anything against that. They meant it seriously. When I spend three hours coloring in little squares, I get a taste of that sadness. It's not a bad thing to subject oneself to now and then. But there is something in painting that I can't experience in this form anywhere else. It's complicated and I can't describe it precisely. But it has a magic all of its own.

SP: I think this magic, as you call it, has a great deal to do with the materiality of the medium. And with the process by which the painting emerges.

MB: Maybe it has to do with the fact that painting always places several levels of time over one another, past and present and future. Everything is there at the same time. And a good picture always continues painting itself, either forwards towards tomorrow, or backwards towards the starting point. To zero, so to speak.

SP: When looking at your pictures I'm often reminded of non-European art, although, as in the case of the phallus symbol, I'm also thinking in terms of its use in the context of-among others-Modernism. At the same time, it makes me think of photographs of indigenous peoples, especially the pictures from colonial times in which the people are served up on a plate just like your figures.

MB: The way I look at the figures can certainly be compared with this colonial gaze. They're portraits, of course. And they all end up in the archive. For a while my pictures also featured strictly symmetrical compositions. That also had an element of obsessive collecting and cataloging. The result was a family tree, a chronicle And I can play around with making links, establishing hierarchies. It's a very childish approach. Taken together, the pictures make up something like an army, or a system that's constantly being extended. Or a large tea party coming together. In my head I use them like actors. Which is fun, as it fosters a healthy distance to the pictures

if you use them as playing cards. Then I begin to see the pictures as posters or flyers. I've always liked that. It means I have my own banana republic.

SP: Can you explain the idea of the cinema trailer again?

MB: When I think about my approach to exhibitions, then the closing credits of 'Dune' are what often comes to mind. Those closing credits are pretty much the best thing about the whole movie. We see the ocean, and the film's protagonists are shown one at a time, with the names of each actor and character. And in the soundtrack is something by Toto. It's like at the end of play when all the actors come back on stage. Really very theatrical. I can't explain precisely but when I saw the film as a teenager that's what fascinated me. More than the movie itself. Best of all, I'd like to just show a film in which my pictures appear briefly one after the other. A slide show. That would be an elegant solution. With the corresponding titles and an archive number. The closing credits of 'Dune' are more like a proud display of inventions. The butterfly collector showing off his best specimens to the public. The trailer has a different function, but one which I also associate with my work. You watch a trailer and you have a thousand new images in your head. 'Piranha' that one was extremely good. And 'Jaws'. A trailer fine to break this promise once in a while. Then the clock in a hat remains a mere joke. This form of 'teasing' can also be used very well in painting. Baiting traps, laying false trails, creating a false sense of security. But this concerns above all myself, not the viewer. This falling into traps is something I wasn't form myself while painting. Sometimes, for example, when I'm painting a big picture I spend days working on one small part. As if I was wearing blinkers. Painting with tunnel vision. Firstly, this serves one's own entertainment. And secondly, it serves the picture. Applying such a focus and deliberately ignoring the picture as whole is important. If you have the finished painting dangling in front of you the whole time like a carrot, you often go too fast. You're in a hurry and before you know it, the thing's finished.



CURRICULUM VITAE

MICHAEL BAUER

b. 1973 in Erkelenz, DE
Lives and works in New York, NY, US

EDUCATION

2004 Foundation of BROTHERSLASHER with Tim Berresheim, Cologne, Germany
2002 Hochschule für Bildende Kunst, Braunschweig, Germany

SELECTED SOLO SHOWS

- 2022 *Return to Ether Shelter*, Nino Mier Gallery, Brussels, BE
- 2020 *Metacaves 1973*, Lyles & King, New York, NY, US
Caves and Gardens, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US
- 2018 *New Paintings*, Salon Nino Mier, Cologne, DE
- 2017 *New Work*, Half Gallery, New York, NY, US
Soft Paintings (Bearnaise), Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US
- 2016 *Men in Pain (Pool Party)*, Norma Mangione Gallery, Turin, IT
- 2015 *Butter Bepop (Transatlantic Creme Dreams)*, Alison Jacques Gallery, London, UK
- 2014 *DEAD DESIGN (He paints, she paints)*, Peter Kilchmann, Zurich, CH
Creme Wars – Snoopie, Lisa Cooley, New York, NY, US
- 2013 *Michael Bauer*, Norma Mangione Gallery, Turin, IT
B.S. vs BABA, 1973, The Apartment, Vancouver, CA
Slow Future – H.S.O.P – OPUS, Alison Jacques Gallery, London, UK
- 2012 *Hankor (ice-cream) – H.S.O.P. – 1973*, Marc Jancou, Geneva, CH
H.S.O.P. – 1973, Lisa Cooley, New York, NY, US
- 2011 *Corridor Plateau*, Kunstverein – Schwerte, Düsseldorf, DE
The summer I started collecting knives, Peter Kilchmann, Zurich, CH
Horns (Tungs), Norma Mangione Gallery, Turin, IT
K-Hole (Frogs), Villa Merkel, Essling, DE
- 2010 *Euro Savage*, with Charlie Hammond, Linn Luhn, Cologne, DE
Golden Gong, with Stefanie Popp, Marquis Dance Hall, Istanbul, TR
- 2009 *Anthem*, Kunsthau Baselland, Basel, CH
Legion Picknick, HOTEL, London, UK
I am Buffy Saint Bursa Bubo/I am Aggro Gauze, Michael Bauer and Stephanie Popp, Artleib, Düsseldorf, DE
- 2007 *French Meat*, Belgian Meat, Peter Kilchmann, Zurich, CH
Basho's Friends, Jack Hanley, San Francisco, CA, US
Basho's Bar, Kunstverein Bonn, Bonn, DE
The Pack, Städtische Galerie Delmenhorst, DE
- 2006 *The Winnipeg Whore*, HOTEL, London, UK
Oldithek für Assos Gold, Maxim, Cologne, DE
- 2005 *DAS KABINETT*, Galerie Hammelehle und Ahrens, Cologne, DE

2004 *Die Toene Meiner Flote*, Galerie Hammelehle Und Ahrens Cologne, DE

SELECTED GROUP SHOWS

- 2023 *Thus Spoke The Rabbit*, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US
- 2023 *Popp & Bauer zu Gast in Bad Wonder*, KunstMuseum, Berlin, DE (*online*)
- 2019 *Viva Ultra*, curated by David Noonan, Mackintosh Lane, London, UK
- 2019 *Body/Object*, George Adams Gallery, New York, NY, US
- 2017 *Pélamide*, Gladstone Gallery, Brussels, BE
Material Life, curated by Davide Ferri, The Goma, Madrid, ES
30th Anniversary Exhibition: Attics of My Life, Jack Hanley Gallery, New York, NY, US
- 2016 *Corridor Plateau VI*, DREI, curated by Christian Freudenberger and Markus Karstieß, Cologne, DE
- 2014 *New Image Painting*, Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, IL, US
- 2013 *Fabian Marti: Marti Collection*, Kunsthau, Centre PasquArt, Biel, CH
La Figurazione Inevitabile, Centro Pecci, a cura di Marco Bazzini e Davide Ferri, Prato, IT
Every Friend of My Friend Is My Friend (Part 2), Chert, Berlin, DE
- 2012 *L'immagine a fuoco*, Norma Mangione Gallery, Turin, IT
Bauer. Croxson. Lichty. Wood, Foxy Production, New York, NY, US
- 2011 *Rearrange Your Face*, Sorcha Dallas, Glasgow, UK
- 2010 *Die Nase des Michelangelo*, Marktgassee House, Zurich, CH
PPP-Public Private Paintings, curated by Phillip van den Bossche, Mu.ZEE, Ostend, BE
Rive Gauche, Rive Droite, Paris with David Noonan, Steve Clayden, Marc Jancou, Paris, FR
Ademeit, a film by Michael Bauer and Marcus Werner Hed, screened at White Columns, New York, NY, US
- 2009 *Die Andere Seite*, Kai10, Düsseldorf, DE
Featuring II, Galerie Chez Valentin, Paris, FR
When The mood strikes, Museum DD, Deurle, DE
Shapeshifter, Aicon Gallery, London, UK
- 2008 *Summer Show*, Schloss Bartenstein, DE
7 Types of Ambiguity, Store Gallery, London, UK
Yilmaz House Band in Concert, Montgomery, Berlin, DE
5000 Jahre Moderne Kunst, Painting, Smoking Eating, Villa Merkel, Esslingen, DE
Germania, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK
- 2007 *Ballet Mecanique* curated by Emma Dexter, Timothy Taylor Gallery, London, UK
Bonjour Monsieur Ensor, Gmür, Berlin, DE
Prague Biennale 3, cur. Helena Kontova, Giancarlo Politi, Prague, PL
Radiant City, Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles, CA, US
Faster, Bigger, Better!, ZKM Karlsruhe curated by Gregor Jansen, Andreas F., Anne Daeuper, Yvonne Ziegler, Karlsruhe, DE
Die anderen Bilder - Outsider und Verwandte aus der Sammlung Hartmut Neumann, Galerie Münsterland, Emsdetten/Kloser Bentlage, Rheine, Flottmann-Hallen, Herne, DE
Gallery Swap HOTEL/, Guido W. Baudach, Berlin, DE
Duet, Lehmann Maupin, curated by Sylvia Chivaranod, New York, US
Accidental Painting, Perry Rubenstein Gallery, New York, US

- 2006 *Wir sind hier wegen der Pommes aus Holland oder Kunstwille aus Holland*, Möma, Mönchengladbach, DE
Die anderen Bilder: Outsider und Verwandtes aus der Sammlung Neumann,
 Museum der Stadt Ratingen, Ratingen, DE
Michael Bauer and Steffie Popp, Cokkie Snoei Gallery, Rotterdam, NL
Figure-Five Position, Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich, CH
- 2005 Galerie Giti Nourbakhsch, (with Lutz Braun, Jan Koch, Susa Reinhardt, Stefan Rinck, Astrid Sourkova),
 Berlin, DE
- 2004 Marc Foxx Gallery, (with Stef Driesen und Chris Brodahl), Los Angeles, CA, US
Screamers, Brotherslasher, Cologne, DE
Whiteboy, Autocenter (with Tim Berresheim und Stefanie Popp), Berlin, DE
Ganz oben, Brotherslasher, Cologne, DE
- 2003 *Keiner ist besser oder eventuell besser*, Brotherslasher, Cologne, DE
- 2002 *Das Leben ist ein Albtraum*, Galerie Nomadenoase, (with Tim Berresheim) Hamburg, DE
Brotherslasher, with Tim Berresheim und Jonathan Meese, Brotherslasher Cologne, DE
- 2001 *When we were kings*, Kunstverein Heinsberg (with Andreas Gehlen, Daniel Janik and Jo Dickreiter),
 Heinsberg, DE
SUPERSCHLOSS, Städtische Galerie, Wolfsburg, DE
- 2000 *Make my paper sound* – Klasse Walther Dahn, Kunstverein Braunschweig, Braunschweig, DE
- 1999 *Junger Westen*, Kunsthalle Recklinghausen, DE

CURATORIAL PROJECTS

- 2011 The Keno Twins 5, Barriera, Turin, IT
 The Keno Twins 4, Villa Merkel, Esslingen am Neckar, DE
- 2010 The Keno Twins 3, Galerie Susanne Zander, Cologne, DE
- 2009 The Keno Twins 2, Hotel Gallery, Stand Art, Cologne, DE
- 2008 The Keno Twins 1, Maxim, Cologne, DE

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Deutsche Bank AG, London, UK
 Dallas Cowboys Collection, Dallas, Texas, US
 Kunstsaale Berlin, Berlin, DE
 Neufert Stiftung mit Sitz in Weimar, Cologne, DE
 Saatchi Collection, London, UK
 Sammlung Boros, Berlin, DE
 Sammlung Südhausbau, Munich, DE
 Zabudowicz Collection, London, UK

An abstract artwork featuring a dense composition of organic, flowing shapes in various colors including green, purple, blue, red, and black. The background is a mix of these colors, with some areas appearing more saturated than others. There are some white and black scribbles and lines scattered throughout the composition, adding to its dynamic and layered appearance.

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