

## PRESS RELEASE

### MICHAEL ORNAUER

#### THE WEIGHT OF COLOR

In the exhibition "**The Weight of Color**" the gallery Suppan is showing new works by the young, aspiring artist Michael Ornauer. Works from the following of his three series will be presented: *Stripes*, *Monochrome* and *Organic-Abstract*.

"It may be due to Michael Ornauer's years of apprenticeship in figurative painting that his works have the power to create their own cosmos on the limited image carrier.

"See all without look", the artist quotes the musician George Harrison, suggesting the almost infinite potential in the layers of his painting. Ornauer's work creates haptic works of art that can be rediscovered again and again and seem to rule out getting full from the outset. The artist's hand succeeds in multifaceted strands of thought and countless brush movements regardless of the format - Ornauer works both in precise miniatures and, ultimately, in large gestures - again and again into a full whole. Between the seduction of absolute harmony and the attraction of the breaking point, Michael Ornauer negotiates authentic standards of aesthetics that are reminiscent of Paul Cézanne's idea - "Art is a harmony that runs parallel to nature".

Born in Vienna in 1979, Michael Ornauer studied figurative painting in the master classes of Hubert Schmalix and Amelie von Wulffen. In 2008 he graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and two years later was nominated for the Georg Eisler Prize of the Bank Austria Kunstforum. Numerous solo and group exhibitions followed, as well as a job as a freelance lecturer at the renowned Städelschule in Frankfurt. In 2017 Ornauer breaks with figuration and turns entirely to abstraction. From the background of his representational paintings, he develops compositions that focus on a deep preoccupation with color.

Color is also the focus of the present exhibition. Here the artist offers three continuous groups of works that cannot simply be separated from one another, but rather mesh with one another. The monochrome works are based on colorful palettes and the organic paintings are based on quiet moments. The stripe images suggest new arrangements, as they are also expressed in the organically grown color palettes. Kilos of paint on self-drawn canvases, occasionally framed by the artist himself, reflect Ornauer's extensive craft, a technical skill that does not leave a square millimeter of an image to chance, but always obeys the guidance of artistic intuition.

Guided by Asian ways of thinking, he also works on imperfections. At those moments that only suggest perfection through their asymmetry. Ornauer practices Zen, which also means that mindfulness and daily meditation are central to his way of working. The Japanese aesthetic of Wabi-Sabi is essential. It becomes comprehensible above all in the monochrome and in those parts of the picture where Ornauer cuts, scratches and grinds into the oil of the canvas. The Japanese "Wabi" stands for the barren, the lonely, the wretched, while "Sabi" stands for the experience, the traces of life, the patina. "These two words add up to more than their sum. I like this kind of beauty philosophically and personally," explains the artist in his studio in Neulengbach. It is the place where he spent his childhood and where he finds inspiration in nature to this day. The preoccupation with it is essential for Ornauer, whereby he always includes a reflection on human nature and fundamental existential questions.

Despite all the complexity that Michael Ornauer offers, the work never seems exaggerated, eclectic or confused. On the contrary, the ability of the artist to represent simultaneity opens up a holistic aesthetic. Believable precisely because Ornauer selects specifically where relationships in color, material and order work together in the right measure of harmony and disharmony. "- Paula Watzl

**Artist Talk with Paula Watzl, Author and Art Historian: 21th June, 18<sup>00</sup>**