

Berlin – L.A. Trilogy II

Michael John Kelly

Language

Opening:

Saturday, January 30, 6 – 9pm

Exhibition Dates:

January 30 – März 5, 2016



Michael John Kelly, *Die Stadt der Königin der Engel*, 2015, Mixed Media on Wood, 180 x 150 cm | 71 x 59 in

I'm always making pictures with a smartphone. Imagery comes in through its camera or Internet connection, they're manipulated with its intuitive interface. Sharing and feedback are immediate. It was important to find a way to integrate this tool into my painting practice. The work is printed digital imagery and paint. I find conversations of 'digital vs. analog' redundant so I'm collapsing these different strategies into a single unified image.

Michael John Kelly

We are very pleased to announce the exhibition "Language" by painter Michael John Kelly, the second part of our Berlin-L.A. trilogy, and the artist's first solo exhibition in Europe. Following an invitation by 68projects, Kelly, who normally lives and works in Los Angeles, spent three months in Berlin during the summer of 2015. There he created a series of vibrant, large-scale drawings and paintings, which compellingly reflect the painter's experience with the different (sub) cultures of Berlin and Los Angeles.

Michael John Kelly's work is characterized by a multitude of different influences and "languages": his images combine painting, print, photography, drawing and collage. In terms of content, they contain elements from new media and abstract expressionism, graffiti and cartoons, but also from science fiction movies and the world of hip-hop and punk rock. Kelly, however, continually emphasizes the equal importance of all of his materials and sources of inspiration. Trying to find titles for his latest works, Kelly experimented with wordings from English, Spanish and German, a move that reflects his own origins, which lie somewhere between Berlin, Austria and L.A.

Whereas the large-scale drawings, which Kelly considers to be preliminary studies for his paintings, have a fragile and delicate aura, his paintings betray a more wide-ranging approach: they are characterized by varied processes of gathering, production, reproduction and re-utilization of digital and analogue materials. He frequently posts his work on the digital image-sharing platforms Tumblr and Instagram, before reproducing the digital images analogically in

order to then reintegrate them into new works. For the Berlin series he brought along prints of abstract colour tables, so-called colour grids, of older works, combined them with flyers and advertising posters he found in Berlin and finally painted over these collages using spray and oil paint. Thus a kind of “circle game” emerged, whereby content from the web, snippets from Kelly’s own paintings, and found materials were fused together into one piece.

Michael John Kelly studied painting at Brigham Young University in Provo/Utah and at UCLA, Los Angeles/California. His works have been displayed in numerous exhibitions in the US. The artist is represented in many notable collections, such as the Susan and Michael Hort Collection, New York; the Gayle and Stanley Hollander Collection, Los Angeles, and the Carole Server and Oliver Frankel Collection, New York.

Michael John Kelly will be present at the opening. On Friday, **January 29 at 6 pm**, there will be an **artist talk** in the exhibition space featuring Michael John Kelley and the art historian Julia Rosenbaum. The talk will be given in English.

The Berlin-L.A. trilogy will be completed in March/April 2016 with a group exhibition by several artists, who took part in a residency programme in Los Angeles, at Villa Aurora amongst other places, and whose work is an intensive exploration of the Californian metropolis.

Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch. We are happy to provide printable images on request.

Berlin – L.A. Trilogy

I Chris Engman, *Landscapes*: 27.11.2015 – 23.1.2016

II Michael John Kelly, *Language*: 30.1. 2016 – 5.3.2016

III Group Exhibition, *Los Angeles*: 12.3.2016 – 16.4.2016

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