

PIPPY HOULDSWORTH GALLERY

STEFANIE HEINZE

Genuflect Softly #1

16 March - 22 April 2017



Bone On Skin (Mary-Won't-Go-Around), 2017,
oil and acrylic on canvas, 180 x 145 cm, 70.9 x 57.1 in.

'One of the traditional definitions of the uncanny locates it at that point where the inanimate becomes animated, where the boundary between the living and the dead, the human and the inhuman, gets fudged.'

- David Kaufmann, *Telling Stories: Philip Guston's Later Works* (2010)

Pippy Houldsworth Gallery is delighted to present young German artist Stefanie Heinze's first solo exhibition in the UK.

In *Genuflect Softly #1*, Heinze wryly looks at painting as a pseudo-religious experience. The artist invests her work with a transcendental, almost ethereal quality by allowing the forms within her paintings to float, morph and collapse in on themselves in a colourful, primordial soup. Christian imagery also creeps into the work; sandal-clad feet walk on water; shapes ascend into the heavens and a triangular figure reminiscent of Michelangelo's Pietà sits upright in *Bone on Skin (Mary-Won't-Go-Around)* (2017). Straddling the boundary between life and death, *eros* and *thanatos*, where sexual, fleshy parts sit alongside bare bones, the meaning of Heinze's work is entirely in limbo. This lack of certainty is reflected in the viewing experience where reason degenerates into nonsense; bright warning tape delineates the gallery space while overshoes and white carpet lends the environment a cold, hospital-like tone. Whilst looking at the work, we are made to feel as clumsy and foolish as the protagonists that inhabit the paintings.

About Stefanie Heinze

Heinze's paintings capture hallucinatory scenes in which corporeal forms bleed into one another; interlocking fingers, heel-clad feet and trunks converge in unexpected conglomerations before dissolving into lush, fleshy brushstrokes. Translating the composition of her paintings from preliminary drawings, Heinze explains that 'constructs without any logical connection bring about new shapes, motions and tensions' in the work. The artist frequently depicts silly protagonists carrying out various, physical tasks; always on the verge of falling over, this fine line between composure and failure adds to the restlessness that characterises the structure of Heinze's paintings as each action and shape blends into the next.

Heinze translates the composition of her paintings from preliminary sketches in ink and pastel. She notes that 'the act of drawing is a process of locating and discovering, with shapes and movements interacting with one another. These forms are often engaged in basic physical functions such as appearing, eating, resting, leaping, nudging, prying into each other's affairs and so on.' Gridding each sketch up into sections, Heinze blows up the composition into its larger, painterly state, arguing that this process adds to the dynamism which enlivens her work. Describing this way of working, the artist explains that 'large formats are perfect for the transfer of drawings to paintings because the shift of movement from the hand or fingertip to the whole arm creates the necessary, physical change.'

Stefanie Heinze (b. 1987; Berlin, Germany) lives and works in Berlin. Heinze is currently part of a group exhibition at Tanya Leighton, Berlin this spring and her work will be featured at Saatchi Gallery, London in *Known Unknowns* later this year. In 2016, Heinze undertook the prestigious nine-week residency program at the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, Maine.