

Press Release

Open Weekend of Zurich Galleries on 29 / 30 October 2011

Sean Dawson, Arnold Helbling *Abstraction & Illusion*

Opening: Sat. 29 October & Sun. 30 October 2011, 11.00 am – 5.00 pm **Duration:** 3 – 11 November 2011

Dear Art Lovers

We look forward to presenting the exhibition “Abstraction & Illusion” with current works by artists Sean Dawson (b. 1964, London UK) and Arnold Helbling (b. 1961, Brugg CH) on the occasion of the Open Weekend of Zurich Galleries. Since its establishment, the gallery has on a regular basis mediated aspects of international abstract art alongside figurative art.

Whereas the New York-based Swiss artist Arnold Helbling has been successfully represented by Fabian & Claude Walter Galerie since 1986, the London artist Sean Dawson is new among the represented artists. The gallery is showing his works for the first time in the context of this two-person show.

Sean Dawson occupies an independent position within modern abstract painting. His works are open to illusions and associations, comparable to the expressive abstract colour drippings of a Jackson Pollock. At the same time his paintings are too well thought-out, constructed and precisely accomplished to allow for automatism. Any impression arising of a spontaneous, informal style of abstraction is exposed as a mere illusion. Each brushstroke is controlled - for Dawson’s technique is closely associated with photorealism. His dynamic paintings are inspired by numerous photographic templates, mostly fashion and architectural photography taken from magazines. In a succession of processes the templates are arranged in collages and photographed. The artist then copies the resulting photographic image, frequently embellished by drawings, onto canvas with great precision. The final impression is that of smooth colour sequences and barely visible brushstrokes before largely black backgrounds. The colour in the foreground does not run synchronously to the shapes, but rather generates a momentum of movement and composition. Dawson’s works are explosions of colour and form, acting upon the eye like an undertow.

Also the new works by artist Arnold Helbling contain an explosive element and play with illusion. They stage constructed realities in which the boundary between abstraction and figuration has been lifted. Like Sean Dawson, Helbling makes use of photographic templates, subjecting them to a progression of manipulations consisting in repeated copying, scaling up and scaling down and projecting, finally resulting in a distortion of relations and perspectives. While in his early work Helbling mainly concerned himself with the meaning of architecture and space, the artist has now placed a new focus on the power of nature, able to permanently supersede architecture and erase the collective memory attached to it. A sequence of four works in the show visualise this balance of power between architecture and nature through symbolic means. Thus, the prominent tree at the centre of the painting “Venedig 726” (“Venice 726”) appears to forcefully push aside the circumjacent buildings. Helbling’s paintings invite the viewer to contemplate the generation of ruins, the erosion and disappearance of structures created and erected by humans.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information or images connected with the show. From 17 to 20 November you will find us at the art fair “Kunst Zürich”, in the ABB-Halle 550, Ricarda-Huch-Strasse, in 8050 Zurich-Oerlikon. We look forward to welcoming you to stand number B3.

Fabian & Claude Walter Simone Toellner