

GLADSTONE GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Magnus von Plessen

March 19 through April 23

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Magnus von Plessen, his first gallery show in the United States. In recent years his paintings have garnered an international reputation through numerous solo museum shows and inclusion in group exhibitions throughout the world. His paintings, stark yet evocative, rely upon a unique vocabulary of abstraction to mediate the surrounding world. The new works exhibited here further explore his manner of using the formal properties of color, line, and paint itself to come close to the subjective nature of perception.

Intrigued by the evocations, feelings, and tangential thoughts the surrounding world provokes, von Plessen searches for the "inner image", an image that mirrors the activity of the mind. His stream-of-consciousness style of figuration compels his at times banal subjects into an authentic presence. As critic Jennifer Higgie notes in her essay accompanying this exhibition, "Even when Magnus von Plessen paints a picture of a man alone in a room the effect is less one of stillness than as if the image had paused in the midst of wrestling with the possibilities of its own representation." The treatment of the brushstroke upon the surface of the canvas reflects the multiplicity of perceiving the outside world: The individuated strokes of paint, applied in layers and thinned away, both accentuate and deny the ability of painting to capture reality. At once affirming paint as object and a painting as construction to perceive the outside world, the abstracted linear quality of the brushstroke obfuscates concrete figuration in favor of splitting open what is seen in order to reveal the varied ways it could be seen. As von Plessen said, his works mine the "divide between the materiality, the brushstroke, pigment and canvas, and the picture, the figure, the chair, and space, i.e. between the physical and the envisaged world I am painting."

In *Allergie (Allergy)*, 2004, a Gordian knot of choppy lines in colors ranging from mildewed blues and greens to electric reds and yellows, the view of a guitar player that eventually breaks through still falls short of figurative resolve and cohesion. Instead, a tension, even beyond that of the abstracted lines of scraped brushstrokes that both build and dismantle the scene, intrigues the viewer: Three discordant clouds of white, the titular allergies, intrigue the viewer while still prohibiting the him from fully solving the riddle of the scene. In a series of work using imagery of a rider on horseback, he uses alternately monochromatic and vibrant palettes to recall both exuberance and enervation. Just as von Plessen moves between abstraction and figuration, the varied views of a similar subject matter examine his interest in representing the inclusive, oft contradictory, reactions of the psyche. The pairing of von Plessen's treatment of the painted surface and the ambiguity of his compositions highlight the concept of his work: As Higgie wrote "the subject of the painting...is simultaneously spot lit and subsumed into the greater subject of the possibilities of pigment on a surface; a space, quite simply, where the imagination is made physical: a place where the eye never stops and the mind never stills."

Magnus von Plessen was born in 1967 in Hamburg, Germany. His paintings have been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions at the Neues Kunstmuseum in Luzern, K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in Düsseldorf, P.S. 1 in New York, and the Centre Pompidou in Paris. A forthcoming survey of his work curated by James Rondeau will be exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago in June. His work was also included in the fiftieth Venice Biennale in 2003. This exhibition is accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue with a text by Jennifer Higgie.

For further information contact Maxime Falkenstein
212 206 9300 or mfalkenstein@gladstonegallery.com