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**DANIEL RICHTER**

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**LE FREAK**

PARIS MARAIS

22 Jun 2017 - 29 Jul 2017

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As from 22 June 2017, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac Paris Marais will present *Le Freak*, an exhibition of new works by Daniel Richter. The exhibition coincides with a retrospective of his work, shown successively at the Louisiana Museum in Humlebaek, Denmark, the 21er Haus Museum of Contemporary Art in the Vienna Belvedere, and due to open on 1 July at the Camden Arts Centre in London.

Daniel Richter's new group of works, *Le Freak*, is a continuation of the series *Hello, I love you* (2015/16, Kunsthalle Schirn, Frankfurt), which constitutes a radical departure from the artist's style of the last decade: 'I wanted to get away from a certain kind of narration and from the theatre stage and from the burden of already knowing what I'm about to do', Daniel Richter stated last year.

In the new paintings the figures and forms are more defined and explicit than in the 2015/16 series, yet they maintain a sense of abstraction, which is reinforced by the background's subtle gradations of colour: 'It's an almost logical step, which involves just having straight lines in the background that shape this fake horizon as in a 'sublime' landscape painting. [...] and then it has elements that drift, because I wanted to be somewhere between extreme backward and extreme forward movement', Daniel Richter said in conversation with Poul Eerik Tojner in the catalogue of the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark, 2016.

Lines of crayon-oil contour patches of colour to reveal body-like shapes in seemingly pornographic poses: spread legs, arched backs, grasping hands and wide-open mouths can be deciphered. Daniel Richter explained in 2015: 'My concern is with the surface, this flat, tangled, never-changing scheme of figure constellations, in and out'. The interplay of vibrant colours and the swift lines connect the silhouettes conveying an idea of movement and fusion. There is a sense of bestiality that emanates from the uncanny gestures and the bizarre faces. The expressive yet non-specific features border on the grotesque, their strangeness resonates with the title of the exhibition: *Le Freak*. Not only does *Le Freak* refer to a 1970s disco song - Daniel Richter habitually includes music references in his works - the presence of 'freaky' faces alludes to the surreal and satirical work of Jack Bilbo (1907-67), an under-recognised German artist, gallerist and pub owner. At Richter's instigation an exhibition of Jack Bilbo's work together with his own paintings took place at the Berlin Max Liebermann Foundation in April/May 2017.

Pornographic imagery is a source and a blueprint for Daniel Richter to explore energy, movement, surface and colour. For Art Historian Eva Meyer-Hermann, the artist also captures and reflects on the commodification of desire in our current over-stimulated environments. In her catalogue essay for *Daniel Richter, Hello, I love you* she wrote: 'The human figures and their interpersonal relationship possibilities are dissolved. Their new forms of presence as painting transforms them in the sense of post-Internet art into a commentary on disappearing privacy and individuality, which has been lost in an inflationary consumer choice with promises of the universal satisfaction of desire.'

Daniel Richter's works are on show in renowned collections worldwide, such as the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Centre Pompidou, Paris, Kunsthalle Kiel, Kunsthalle Hamburg, Nationalgalerie Berlin, Kunsthalle Stuttgart, Museum der Bildenden Künste Leipzig, Gemeente Museum, The Hague, Contemporary Art Collection of the Federal Republic of Germany, MoMA New York, Denver Art Museum and Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain Strasbourg.

Comprehensive solo exhibitions have been held at the Kunsthalle Kiel, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf (both 2001), National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (2005), Kunsthalle, Hamburg and Gemeentemuseum, The Hague (both 2007), CAC Málaga, Denver Art Museum (both 2008) and Kestnergesellschaft, Hanover, Germany (2011). More recently, the Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck, Austria (2014) and Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2014/15), have devoted monographic shows to Daniel Richter.

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