

TANJA POL GALERIE

CHRISTIAN HELLMICH
SWEET & LOWDOWN/MAGAZIN UND KULISSE
05/03/09 - 18/04/09

We are pleased to present the first solo show of Christian Hellmich in Munich.

SWEET & LOWDOWN/MAGAZIN UND KULISSE (engl. sweet and lowdown, magazine and backdrop), the very abstract and seemingly cryptic title of this exhibition stands for Christian Hellmich's approach to art – which can be summarized as “identifying things without recognizing them”, both in terms of the production and the reception of his paintings.

Christian Hellmich uses a great many pictorial sources from many different fields – from a supermarket advertising flyer to Lorenzo Lotto, as he himself puts it. His aim is not to address the obsolete divide between high and low culture, but he rather simply sees the coexistence of all manner of available and exploitable pictorial worlds free of value judgements as the starting point for his art. These are the facts of our visual reality: LOWDOWN (the truth, the facts, the bottom line), and SWEET for temptation and whatever may be shallow or easily accessible. The openness of the “sweet” and the “hard” facts often determines the directions Hellmich's work will take, and he describes his method as “making definitions within the exactitude of the vague”.

The paintings in this exhibition seem to be abstract, but any observer who has seen Hellmich's earlier work will see very concrete references here. These images are reminiscent of architectural forms and of fragments of seen objects, which however cannot be easily named. Design patterns and painterly textures waver between spatial depth and a flat surface, and also between demonstrative painterly prowess and slovenliness.

In this exhibition a scene is simulated, a BACKDROP as an intermediate space between a stage-set-like pictorial reality and real seen and experienced reality. The image as a scene is also a location for possibility, for new readings or interpretations of the status quo; it is a MAGAZINE, a place for storage.

Christian Hellmich's painting is characterized by a delicate balance between all of its painterly and referential parameters.

Hellmich, born in Duesseldorf, Germany, in 1977, lives and works in Cologne; he studied painting at the Folkwang School in Essen and participated in numerous group shows, especially in the USA; recently his works were part of the group show WHAT KIND OF PAINTING? at Sprueth Magers Projekte, Munich. 2006 he had a solo show at Lehmann Maupin, New York (catalogue).