

Keltie Ferris

\\TWO\\ \\FOLD\\

5.11. – 17.12.22

Kadel Willborn and Klemm's are pleased to present the first double exhibition by co-represented artist Keltie Ferris. The conception and selection of the works were specially created for both galleries in Düsseldorf and Berlin and impressively combine Keltie Ferris' workflow of the last two years. Synergies are characteristic of Keltie Ferris' painterly approach, which integrates references to classical modernism, performance and street art to develop a surprisingly dynamic, powerful visual language. His works combine the illusion of space with direct references to the body. Both exhibitions bring together his new, abstract paintings with an impressive expansion of his "Body Print" series that he began with in 2015, still with a female gender identity.

Viewing the Body Prints, the performances of Yves Klein in the 1960s inevitably come to mind. However in Keltie Ferris' first series 2015 her/his body is donned with a jeans-shirt. Now his clothing changes from jeans-shirt, t-shirt to an undressed body that he covers with linseed oil, paint and pigments to then press the body in an active process against the sheets of paper previously treated with color. The pictures appear like photographs that, comparable to X-ray images, depict what is hidden "inside," except that here we enter into the mental inside. Keltie Ferris' "Body Print" series impressively shows that gender identity is fluid. Already in 2015 Keltie Ferris emphasizes:



Keltie Ferris \\TWO\\ \\FOLD\\, 2022

oil and powdered pigment on paper
121,9 × 132,1 cm

“If your body is not the battleground or at least on the battleground, then it's probably not a real battle or you are just hiding. It definitely raises the stakes when you bring your own self into the picture. Also, I feel that my androgyny changes this conversation, since I am not normally an object of male desire or whathaveyou. Sometimes, the body prints appear male, and sometimes they appear clearly very female. So even though it's always me, it's not necessarily always a female body in the print.”

Kadel Willborn

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Keltie Ferris' new, large-format paintings display a combination of sprayed, hand-painted, impasto, and transparent color surfaces, raising the complex interplay between body, space and identity to an abstract level. As a former athlete, Ferris speaks of his/her painting as a "stage of the body" that is actively processed. The sprayed parts on large formats like "S?!i?!r?!e?!n?!s" require an elaborate interplay of controlling the body and constructing the illusionistic color space. Through the superimposition of rectangular color surfaces, the large-format works, for example, "The Poly Galactics" or "The Dysphotics" play with the art-historical reference to the "grid" as it was taken up above all by Pop Art and later in the 1980s by Polke, as well. The grid as the symbol of halftone and the "infinite reproducibility" of artworks has been ironically cited by many painters during the history of art. For Keltie Ferris, the grid is an expression of our contemporary era and plays with the appearance of pixels in our digital image worlds. When taking a closer look, we recognize the illusion of sprayed lines that could disappear again at any moment. The painting entitled "miRRor" stands in contrast to this "digital transcendence," combining abstract modernism and pointillism with the impasto application of paint, while at the same time constructing the illusion of an art-historical classic, a "window view," not to a far distance, however, but to a fascinating, abstract microcosm. Keltie Ferris' conception of painting as a „bodily fact“ und therefore an individual „counterpart“ is succinctly expressed in his quote:

„Paintings can seduce, they can shock, they can whisper. I try to make the most direct and frank painting as possible, paintings that are so obviously being themselves.“



Keltie Ferris miRRor, 2022

oil and acrylic on canvas
182,9 × 152,4 × 4,4 cm

Biographical Note:

Keltie Ferris' (US 1977) works are part of renowned museum collections such as The Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City or The Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art (Oppenheimer Collection), Overland Park. In 2018 The Speed Art Museum in Kentucky dedicated a solo exhibition to Keltie Ferris. Recent solo exhibitions include „Body Prints and Paintings“ at Gana Art Sounds, Seoul, Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York (both 2021), the University Art Museum at SUNY Albany, New York (2016) or „Keltie Ferris: Domsday Boogie“ at the Santa Monica Museum of Art, Los Angeles (2014). His earlier Body Prints are currently on view in at the exhibition „Empowerment“, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany.

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