

Robert Muntean Just like Honey



Robert Muntean, *Feel good now*, 2018

Just like Honey
14 December 2018 – 9 February 2019
Private view: Thursday 13 December 2018
6.30–8.30pm

“My paintings shift from ‘feedback’ or ‘noise’ to very melodic moments.
It’s always this dualism that generates the works.”

Robert Muntean’s paintings have an umbilical relationship to music. Just as the improvisatory quality of the rhythm reveals an endless sense of possibilities, so does the artist’s paintings. The music of the groups that crucially influenced Muntean’s idea of art – the first disc of Jesus and Mary Chain, The Swans and Sonic Youth – oscillate endlessly between melody and dissonance in the same way as the artist’s practise. One has to work to enter their musical world; similarly, Muntean’s style eschews any easy path into his paintings denying us an easy, linear narrative.

‘Just like Honey’, the artist’s second solo show at rosenfeld porcini, features a selection from Muntean’s latest body of work comprising of oil paintings on canvas, oil paintings on paper attached to canvas and framed collages, which act as the initial inspiration for his compositions. The title refers to the pure pleasure to be gained from entering his artistic universe, with its richness of colours, lusciousness of paint and variety of brush strokes. A new book ‘Sonic Wave’ will be published in tandem with the exhibition, tracing Muntean’s career over the last five years.

His previous exhibition was rooted in a very painterly figuration where the complex layering of the rich breadth of colour took on the heritage of Cubism. His following body of paintings became far looser with an increasingly abstract feel, revealing Muntean’s desire at the time to almost negate the necessity of a subject. Large areas of the canvas would be left unpainted. The sense of a new kind of musical improvisation felt palpable. However, from that point on, the artist’s profound allegiance to the figure began to return to prominence.



Robert Muntean, *The Glowing Man*, 2018

This exhibition, marks the return of the figure as an anchor in Muntean's practise. His figures strike a tension between both blurring into the background and at the same time emerging out of it. When looking at the works, the human beings depicted never refer to any specific individual. Human presence and all its inherent complexity is manifested as form, colour and paint. From a formal point of view, the combination of subtle mark making contrasted with the areas which are heavily layered create the ultimate juxtaposition between harmony and discord. The repetition of the same figurative motifs can be seen as an endless variation on a theme.

Neither a political nor a social artist but rather a continuer of the great Austrian tradition from the end of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century, Muntean's palette and allegiance to the figure echoes the works of Moser, Gerstl and Kokoschka to name a few. The expressionism of colours is in his DNA, yet his works are clearly of our time.

Robert Muntean born 1982 in Leoben, Austria. Lives and works in Berlin. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna (2000- 2005) & the Academy of Visual Arts in Leipzig (2005-2006). Muntean did further studies at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna (2006).

Robert Muntean has had numerous solo presentations in galleries and institutions across Europe and internationally including the USA and China. His work is featured in prominent collections such as the Leopold Museum, the Siemens Collection and the Collection of the Federal Ministry for Education in Vienna amongst others.