

walter storms galerie

For immediate release

CHRIS SUCCO

White Paintings | Spark Paintings

March 24 - May 06, 2023

Opening: March 23, 2023 from 6 pm - 8 pm

Walter Storms Galerie

Schellingstrasse 48

80799 Munich, Germany

Tue - Fri 10.00 am – 6.00 pm, Sat 11.00 am – 4.00 pm

In his first solo exhibition at Walter Storms Galerie, Düsseldorf-based artist Chris Succo is showing new works created especially for this presentation. They belong to two ongoing series, White Paintings and Spark Paintings. Both groups of works focus on the layering of white paint. This material structures the pictorial composition as a malleable space where each individual painting is able to unfold. Painterly collage works constitute a third component in the exhibition, through which Succo strives to fathom the vast scope of impact afforded by the color “white.”

Chris Succo embarked on his first White Paintings in the early 2010s. The manual layering of paint and the painterly realm’s inherent sculptural dimension prompted the multidisciplinary artist to deliberately focus on painting as a medium.

In the impasto application of white paint on canvases previously primed with spray paint, Succo found an idiosyncratic stylistic device that also characterizes his latest White Paintings in this exhibition. We can detect a material kind of tension in these works. It unfurls between the thinly coated background and the white surface, which is densely populated by swiftly applied layers of brushwork. While color is often the decisive factor for the atmospheric dynamics in a pictorial structure, Succo’s White Paintings counteract this premise by using white to deliberately restrain the impact of color. The colorful canvas background is transformed into a subtle undertone supporting the gestural, dynamic painting surface, which is further accentuated in certain areas by the use of paint squeezed directly from the tube.



Chris Succo
Flake, 2023
Oil and varnish on canvas, artist frame
213,36 cm x 160,02 cm
Photo: Achim Kukulies, Düsseldorf



Chris Succo
Spark Painting (SP2305), 2023
Oil and varnish on canvas, artist frame
111,8 cm x 111,8 cm
Photo: Achim Kukulies, Düsseldorf

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The interplay between chromatic elements and the white color surface is also an important element in the Spark Paintings. However, these are based on a different layering principle. If from afar they seem like an inversion of cosmic impressions created by bright stars in a dark void, on closer inspection it becomes apparent that the visual effect conveying black dots on white paint is deceptive. The white is only applied as a second layer. It encircles the individual “sparks,” which originate from an abstract interpretation of the sparks produced by fire. But in contrast to the rapidly burning, sparkling process witnessed in nature, Succo materializes his “sparks” in the thicket of a white mass. They appear to have been arrested in mid-motion, like a snapshot captured for eternity—which, in turn, draws a connection to his photographic oeuvre.

In some of the exhibited works, yet another aspect of Succo’s technical vocabulary comes to the fore: extraneous, spray-painted pieces of canvas that are collaged into the White Paintings. Works such as *Vanishing Point*, *Flake*, and *Midnight Rambler* situate the once again strongly gestural, white pictorial surface around these collaged elements. In their transparently sprayed, delicate surface quality, these roughly cut-out scraps of canvas contrast with the patina of the white pictorial environment into which they have been embedded. This once again discloses Succo’s delight in experimenting with material contrasts. Despite individually varying parameters, Succo’s image-making process remains intuitive at its core. Painting titles also betray the aspiration to freedom found in his artistic approach: while they can sound poetic and even literary, they are at times descriptively matter-of-fact, as if referring to concrete circumstances. Either way, they cannot be completely deciphered; it is a fitting response to the impenetrability of his paintings.

Text by Tatjana Schaefer, assistant curator at the Pinakothek der Moderne



Chris Succo

Zero, 2022

Oil and varnish on canvas, artist frame
81 cm x 61 cm

Photo: Achim Kukulies, Düsseldorf

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About Walter Storms Galerie

Walter Storms Galerie is a leading international art gallery in Munich founded by art historian Walter Storms in 1977. Since the beginning the gallery program has specialized in contemporary conceptual art based on the German ZERO tradition. The gallery is characterized by a constant collaboration and promotion between members of the renowned Zero group, important representatives of the European Avantgarde, Biennale and Documenta participants as well as young emerging talents. Walter Storms became well known after only a short period of time because of his extraordinary commitment to artists from Eastern Europe. In Germany the gallery was the first to represent Roman Opalka and Stanislav Kolibal whose participations at several documenta and Biennales were initiated and supervised by the gallery, recently at the Venice Biennale 2019. Walter Storms collaborates with a number of well-known artists including one of the most important German painters Günther Uecker, who since 1980 has been represented in numerous first-class solo exhibitions, and organized exhibitions in international institutions and museums such as Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Museum of the 20th Century, Vienna. As founder and representative of the Günter Fruhtrunk Gesellschaft Walter Storms manages the artistic estate of Günter Fruhtrunk (1923-1982) and published an extensive and unprecedented complete catalog of the German painter. On the occasion of Günter Fruhtrunk's 100th birthday this year, comprehensive exhibitions will be shown at the Kunstmuseum Bonn, the Lenbachhaus Munich and Museum Wiesbaden.

In addition to the gallery program Walter Storms produces content through his own book publishing house and produces a wide range of prints and artists' books.

The young up-and-coming generation of artists is recruited from the Academies of Fine Art in Düsseldorf, Leipzig and Munich whose active promotion through scholarships, donations to museums, voluntary work is a matter close to the heart of the gallery. The gallery operates now three locations and a large sculpture garden in the center of Munich. The spacious 500 sqm exhibition hall in the center of Munich's Kunstareal surrounded by museums and Pinakotheken opened in 2009 with a show by Sean Scully. Currently the gallery is organizing a project with Sean Scully to create the stained-glass windows of the St. Martin Church in Landshut.

Walter Storms Galerie participates in numerous art fairs such as ARCO Madrid, Art Basel, Art Berlin, Art Chicago, ArtFrankfurt, Shanghai Art Fair and has been permanently represented at Art Cologne for 39 years. The gallery sees itself as a partner of the artists and from the beginning has been working only directly with the artists.

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