

Friedemann Heckel

14 September - 3 November 2018

Friedemann Heckel has always drawn figures, but rarely included them in his public artistic practice. In his new series of watercolors, he links his interest in drawings of the human body with the visual worlds of the social-media platform Instagram. Heckel takes motifs he finds that focus on staging and revealing the subject's own body and address the publication of private images in a playful or provocative way. The rapid change of images and the fleeting gaze while browsing the platform are interrupted while the artist paints. His goal is less to create a new picture, but rather an act of redrawing and feeling his way through the pictures, exploring an approach to longing, desire, voyeurism, and the dramatic flood of images.

Browsing through strangers' Instagram accounts, Friedemann Heckel collects photographs that he then transfers to watercolors, always using the same format and the same reticent style of painting. In the process, he pursues the playing with the poses, the flirting with the viewer that takes place on the images. The figures engage so self-evidently and directly in this posing and flirting that the question of the real or unreal and their own vulnerability hardly seems to be raised. The limits of what can be shown are shifted ever further, but actual intimacy remains lacking, although constantly suggested. A discomfort and a simultaneous fascination in the face of the bodies contorting themselves before the camera serves as a point of departure for Friedemann Heckel's works.

With his approach, Heckel responds to a sense of the impossibility of creating something original in the face of the sheer quantity of what already exists and is repeated over and over. For the artist, the pictures chosen represent objects of an engagement in drawing that in turn is able to generate a certain distance to the mechanisms of photography. Drawing works against the self-evidence of what is seen and allows for an emancipation from the strong and spontaneous impact that the photographed images develop. The gaze thus falls on details like two pairs of hands on top of one another, the color of objects in the rear of those portrayed, the shadows that form on androgynous or muscular bodies or the folds of fabric. Heckel's images avoid all expressiveness and reveal an exactitude and precision in representation that seems to scan the motifs or to dissect them. By withdrawing the garish light from the photographed bodies and transferring them to delicate, watery colors, an organic coolness emerges that allows for another access to the represented than the sterility of photography.

Leah Heckel

Translated by Brian Currid

Friedemann Heckel (born in Hamburg in 1986) lives in Berlin.

Since 2016 he has been working together with Lukas Müller as HC.

Heckel studied at Universität der Künste in Berlin with Lothar Baumgarten and Michaela Meise.

His work has been included in exhibitions at Kunsthalle Baden Baden, 2018; East Hampton Shed,

East Hampton, New York, 2018; Bob's Pogo Bar, KW Berlin, 2017 (HC); Kunstsaele, Berlin, 2016 (HC)

Smart Objects, Los Angeles, 2015; and Kleine Humboldt Galerie, Berlin, 2015.

Galerie Thomas Fischer

Potsdamer Str. 77-87, Haus H

10785 Berlin +49 30 74 78 03 85

mail@galeriethomasfischer.de

T/
F