

Friedrich Kunath

The Art Of Surviving November

First Floor, 41 Dover Street, London W1S 4NS

7 November 2023 – 6 January 2024

Opening: Tuesday, 7 November, 6 – 8 pm

Galerie Max Hetzler, London, is pleased to announce *The Art Of Surviving November*, **Friedrich Kunath's** inaugural solo exhibition with the gallery.

Presenting a new body of paintings, the exhibition delves the viewer into Kunath's quintessentially beguiling and nostalgic world. The works, which draw from a wide array of references spanning music, pop-culture, German Romanticism, philosophy, literature and film, offer poetic and existential contemplations on the composite fabrics of life. At once illuminating and covert, they shift playfully between mischief and melancholy, comedy and curiosity, weaving together conscious and unconscious thought.

The title of the exhibition pertains to a large painting of two blue parrots, swooping through a dense jungle landscape. 'The Art Of Surviving November' is scrawled in small black script above them, as they soar through mottled skies. Along the edges of the canvas, thick bulges of impasto paint remind the viewer of the pictorial nature of the work: this is but a painted illusion, not a window to a far-off land. In another composition titled *I Dream Of It Often*, 2023, the work appears again, this time as a painting within a painting. Placed upon an easel in the artist's studio, the image provides a burst of colour in an otherwise reticent room daubed in blue. The artist, silhouetted and brooding, sits before the tropical promise of his work.

This is the nature of Kunath's paintings: they flit between sadness and joy, banality and euphoria, presenting canvases that read as open books of emotion, ever ready for interpretation – or misunderstanding. Subverting assumptions and instilling his sublime paintings with a healthy dose of irony, Kunath creates images that cherish a democracy of meaning. In *It's A Start.*, 2020–2022, a winding road paves down towards the vast ocean, marking the start of a journey that seems to lead to nowhere at all.

Words and wordplay have an important role in Kunath's practice. Citing everyday memos as much as philosophical ideas, they imbue the paintings with both humour and profundity. As well as painting onto the canvas, the artist also scratches words and phrases directly into the wet oil paint, creating palimpsests of half-baked thoughts. Describing this process as a 'raw dialogue with the canvas', Kunath starts out by building abstract compositions, before layering his works with reference images and fragments of text. Finally, a representational image is often applied – a Cartier van, a tennis ball, a jazz band of



Friedrich Kunath
The Art Of Surviving November, 2023
Photo: Robert McKeever

cartoon fruit – cultural signifiers from a personal or collective consciousness. Working in the tradition of music, Kunath sees himself as a composer, pulling together, sampling and synthesising that which already exists into multilayered and referential compositions. ‘Everything’s there,’ he explains, ‘I just recompose it.’

Kunath grew up in Karl-Marx-Stadt, a district of East Germany that no longer exists. This sense of homesickness, of longing for a forgotten past, permeates his entire oeuvre. Emigrating to Los Angeles in 2007, his dreamscapes are rich with psychological dichotomy, bridging personal biography and universal resonance. His paintings, entangling cynicism and sincerity, occupy a unique space between tragedy, comedy and romance, while remaining ever hopeful.

Friedrich Kunath (*1974, Chemnitz, Germany) lives and works in Los Angeles. The artist’s work has been the subject of solo exhibitions in institutions including KINDL, Berlin; Centro de Arte Contemporáneo (CAC), Malaga (both 2023); Kunstsammlung Jena (2021); Philara Collection, Düsseldorf (2016); Centre d’art contemporain d’Ivry - le Crédac, Ivry-sur-Seine; Kunsthalle Bremerhaven; CAPRI, Düsseldorf; Nassau County Museum of Art, New York (all 2014); Modern Art Oxford (2013); Sprengel Museum, Hanover (2012); Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin (2011); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Kunstsaale, Berlin (both 2010); Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden; Kunstverein Hannover (both 2009); Kunsthaus NRW Kornelimünster, Aachen (2007); Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn (2002); and The Modern Institute, Glasgow (2000), among others.

Kunath’s work is included in the collections of Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, among others.

Friedrich Kunath’s work will be presented in a duo exhibition at Kunsthalle Düsseldorf; and a solo exhibition at G2 Kunsthalle, Leipzig, both opening in Spring 2024.

Further exhibitions and events

Berlin:

3 November 2023 – 10 February 2024

Richard Prince

Body

Potsdamer Straße 77-87, 10785 Berlin

11 November 2023 – 6 January 2024

Rebecca Warren

She She

Goethestraße 2/3, 10623 Berlin

17 November 2023 – 6 January 2024

Hans Josephsohn

Bleibtreustraße 45 and 15/16, 10623 Berlin

Marfa:

4 May – 10 December 2023

Grace Weaver

Indoor Paintings

1976 Antelope Hills Road

Press Contact

Galerie Max Hetzler
Natalia Fuller
natalia@maxhetzler.com
London: +44 20 7629 7733

www.facebook.com/galeriemaxhetzler
www.instagram.com/galeriemaxhetzler

Sign up for our Newsletter

