

André Butzer *Frau am Tisch mit Früchten*

1 March – 5 April 2025
46 & 57, rue du Temple, 75004 Paris

Opening: Saturday, 1 March, 6 – 8pm



André Butzer, *Frau am Tisch mit Früchten (1)*, 2024–2025
© André Butzer, photo: def image

Galerie Max Hetzler is pleased to present *Frau am Tisch mit Früchten*, **André Butzer's** third solo exhibition with the Paris gallery.

André Butzer envisions things astutely and in earnest with shocking clarity: table, fruit, woman. In four monumental paintings, created for the main hall of the gallery, he intertwines them in a planarly whole: *Frau am Tisch mit Früchten (1–4)*, 2024–2025.

With each painting, Butzer leads us onto the same threshold. A red plane, hemmed in by the white of the canvas, opens up an enormous interior space within the image. The abundant red hue does not only constitute the surrounding ambient colour, it is the site of the painting itself. Butzer merges all spatial properties in total flatness. The entire image is a colour field, a room, a wall, a floor, a tableau, a table and even a tablecloth.

With light and transparent strokes, Butzer lets the plane sway into the depths. The image sways in the plane and in the depths of the chromatic expanse, being both flat and infinitely deep. Closeness and distance, plane and space, ground and figure are inextricably connected. Palpably withdrawn, yet equally close and tangible. Painterly, this is felt so simply and so vastly that each image can unite these opposites within itself.

The red is radiant and agitated, yet it is repeatedly traversed by fine horizontal and vertical seams and joints – the fundamental orientations of the pictorial fabric. Along these axes or hinges, the picture plans join together like wall panels, planks and floorboards.

Butzer places a dark purple block directly into the red or, in *Frau am Tisch mit Früchten (3)*, a slightly truncated light blue round. Sparse furnishings. On and around these “tables” or on the table-like images are bright, probably Mediterranean fruits: peaches, oranges, apples and lemons. Laid out and scattered, descending and ascending, floating about – but always firmly in their own place. And above it all, a single woman's head appears, embedded and set in red like a medallion on a wall.

None of these interiors have a clear centre. The forms, planes, things and figures are placed asymmetrically, standing out from each other as if cut out with scissors. Only in his masterful command of the elementarily relational nature of the primary colours red, yellow, blue, of flesh colour as the

embodiment of human presence, and of a few complementary contrasts, does Butzer achieve a colouristic solidity that gives the image a secure hold.

In some paintings, doors or windows are hinted at. But these passages, painted red in red, are veiled and lead immediately back onto the plane. Self-referentially, the pictures confidently expose their own pictoriality. And yet everything that appears is light and bright. Each colour radiates mildly in its own intrinsic light. The pictorial field itself is a clearing, a place of sheer appearance, a revelation.

The woman with light blue eyes and golden hair is simply there. For if the canvas is the place of colour and colour is the place of appearance, Butzer's women appear in and of themselves. In their apparent seriality, each of them is unique, as a young girl, as a woman. Almost festive in mood and gesture, the woman is empathetically integrated into the tenderly shimmering red colour field. Is she decorating the table and the image with fruit? Does she gather them, or does she give them away freely? Does she grant or take life?

As if dwelling in her own possibilities, with a gentle smile and cheerful serenity, the woman gazes beyond the merely visible. But where is she looking? Whose appearance is she waiting for? 'She is looking somewhere else. Her gaze,' says Butzer, 'is pure. It's connected to the truth. It's interesting to follow what her eyes allude to.'¹

The dark blue eyes and the azure of the table, for instance, are mutually related in *Frau am Tisch mit Früchten* (3). Or is it the sky that is reflected on the table from outside, as in water or a bowl? Maybe the table itself is the sky, whose blue shimmer we see from an even higher sphere?

The colours and tables, the fruits and women come in and out of appearance, and in this cyclical process of passing and returning, the painting is fulfilled and realised for Butzer. Nothing is lost. Everything is accommodated in the complete existence of the image, in which time is also planar. Temporality is a plane upon which everything that was, is and will be, is present at the same time. Again and again and anew. Remaining and standing firm.

Even the fruits are part of this temporal coherence. They are cyclically rounded in themselves and embody beginning, birth and life, maturity, decay and death, new beginnings, rebirth and renewed ripening. Their colourful appearance contains what has been and what is to come, is both a decorative ornament and protective peel, the completion of an old life and the vessel for a new one. Butzer sees all this as one.

Even when, as in *Tisch mit Früchten*, 2025, the figure is abruptly absent. The human contiguity, however, is still there. By making the world palpable in a still life, even if only for a moment, Butzer gives lived experiences a place that affects and involves us all. A brief stay, an abode, perhaps even a dwelling in the light of an image that allows us to recognise the concealed possibilities of being, allotted only to us.

André Butzer's paintings are filled with the world, because they are truthful and whole. Truth dwells in the intrinsic light of colour, upon a face, in a garland of fruit, on a chair with a yellow backrest, in body and soul, in the deepest blackness and certainly in the kitchen stove. He places the experience inherent to his paintings before us, brought to full fruition in a preserving and giving way: 'making legible the path of life and / making it walkable – / that is, knowingly living and / dying towards death / living dyingly ... / and thus: / being gratefully grateful.'²

Christian Malycha

¹ André Butzer in conversation with H. Hwang and G. Ahn, 'Why André Butzer did not smile?', in: *Vogue Korea*, December 2023.

² André Butzer from 'Instinkt und Schicksal' (15 October 2024), in: *André Butzer: Pressemitteilungen, Briefe, Gespräche, Texte, Gedichte. Band 4: 1983–2025*, Vienna: Verlag für moderne Kunst, 2025.

André Butzer (b. 1973, Stuttgart) lives in Berlin. Solo exhibitions of his work have been held in international institutions including Gesellschaft für Gegenwartskunst, Augsburg; Museo Novecento, Florence; Museo Stefano Bardini, Florence; St. Nikolaus, Innsbruck; nw9 Kunstraum der Stiftung Kunstwissenschaft, Cologne (all 2024); Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid; Kebbel Villa | Oberpfälzer Künstlerhaus, Schwandorf; Miettinen Collection, Berlin; Kunstverein Friedrichshafen (all 2023); Friedrichs Foundation, Weidingen (2022); Yuz Museum, Shanghai; Museum of the Light, Hokuto (both 2020); IKOB Musée d'Art Contemporain, Eupen (2018); Växjö Konsthall, Växjö (2017); Bayerisches Armeemuseum, Ingolstadt; Neue Galerie Gladbeck (both 2016); Kunstverein Reutlingen (2015); Halle für Kunst, Graz (2014); Kestnergesellschaft, Hanover; Kunsthistorisches Museum / Theseustempel, Vienna (both 2011); Kunsthalle Nuremberg (2009); Kunstverein Ulm (2005); and Kunstverein Heilbronn (2004), among others.

Butzer's works are in the collections of Aishti Foundation, Beirut; Art Institute of Chicago; Aurora Museum, Shanghai; Carré d'Art, Nîmes; Children's Museum of the Arts, New York; CICA Center of International Contemporary Art, Vancouver; Contemporary Art Collection of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn; Deichtorhallen, Hamburg; Friedrichs Foundation, Weidingen / Bonn; Galerie moderního umění, Hradci Králové; Galerie Stadt Sindelfingen; Hall Art Foundation, Reading / VT | Derneburg; Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart, Berlin; Hölderlinturm, Tübingen; IKOB Musée d'Art Contemporain, Eupen; Kupferstichkabinett / Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin; LACMA Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Marciano Art Collection, Los Angeles; MARE Museum, Bucharest; MOCA Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Musée d'art Moderne de Paris; Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid; Museo Novecento, Florence; Museum Reinhard Ernst, Wiesbaden; Paula Modersohn-Becker Museum, Bremen; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Rubell Museum, Miami; Sammlung Goetz, Munich; Space K, Seoul; Ståhl Collection, Norrköping; Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus / Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Munich; Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck; University of Washington, Seattle; Wooyang Museum of Contemporary Art, Gyeongju-si; and Yuz Museum, Shanghai, among others.

Further exhibitions and events

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20 February – 12 April 2025
Potsdamer Straße 77–87
10785 Berlin

Karel Appel
The Classic Themes
1 March – 12 April 2025
Bleibtreustraße 45
10623 Berlin

Stories of Your Lives
1 March – 12 April 2025
Goethestraße 2/3 & Bleibtreustraße 15/16
10623 Berlin

LONDON

Carroll Dunham
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27 February – 12 April 2025
41 Dover Street
London W1S 4NS

MARFA

Richard Prince
May – December 2025
1976 Antelope Hills Road
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