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**ALBERT OEHLLEN
AN OLD PAINTING IN SPIRIT
MAY 30 - AUGUST 16 2015
PRESS INFORMATION: FRIDAY, MAY 29, 11AM
OPENING: FRIDAY, MAY 29, 6PM**

Albert Oehlen's first major institutional exhibition with the title *Abräumung* (Clearing Away) took place in Kunsthalle Zürich in 1987. Now, almost thirty years later, Kunsthalle Zürich presents its second installment of works by this German painter, who was born in 1954 and has been living in Appenzell for the last decade.

Looking at his most recent works it becomes apparent that Oehlen is rightly viewed as a game-changing artist, precisely because he continues to upset our ideas of painting, beauty, vision and reasoning. This includes assertions by the artist, which, like his art, leave us asking questions. A few examples:*

"The lights are out in the land of motifs."

"Just push a window open and, as one of my friends says, let justice in."

"Art has always quarreled with reality, coming up close and cheekily trying to chat up the actual."

"Right, you have to expose the medium to as much pressure as possible, and then proper beauty will come of it."

Shown in conjunction for the first time, *An Old Painting In Spirit* in the Kunsthalle Zurich brings together works from the 1980s, two new painting cycles and a selection of about fifty rarely shown drawings. On first impression the variety dominates as if several artists are at work here. A fierce brown-grey painting style meets brightly colored canvases – collages made from scraps of advertising posters – which in turn hang next to a series of recent paintings executed on large Dibond aluminium panels. The panels reveal tree-like black shapes on red, blue and white backgrounds, brimming with unromantic severity. In *An Old Painting In Spirit* visual concepts and painting styles interact with each other in a way one would not believe possible. All test the boundaries of painting and challenge our expectations. And yet they also tell of something quite different: Of the daring required to clear the way with the brush, again and again, to obtain a space in which unexpected forms of beauty may occur.

*The quotations were excerpted from:

Albert Oehlen/Daniel Baumann, «Im Land der Motive brennt kein Licht mehr/The Lights are out in the Land of in the Land of Motifs» Interview in: *Die Götter im Exil/Gods in Exile*, exh.cat. Kunsthaus Graz, Cologne 2006. / Albert Oehlen, exh.cat. Salzburger Kunstverein, 1993, S. 6. / A. Oehlen. *Albert Oehlen im Gespräch mit Wilfried Dickhoff und Martin Prinzhorn*, Cologne 1991, p. 73 and p. 78.

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We are happy to provide additional information and digital visual material:
Tel. +41 (0)44 272 15 15 or email presse@kunsthallezurich.ch

During the opening on May 29, 2015, at 8.30pm the band Wertmüller-Pliakas-Wittwer will give a concert. Michael Wertmüller, drums / Marino Pliakas, electric bass / Stephan Wittwer, electric guitar

The exhibition will be documented on www.kunsthallezurich.ch.
Accompanying the exhibition the opening concert will be released on LP.

Theory & Programs:

Tours

The art of Albert Oehlen challenges the medium of painting, and our understanding of it. The theory and education program of his exhibition *An Old Painting in Spirit* seeks to challenge the format of the guided tour, which has been declared dead and undying at once in a similar way to painting. Thus we will talk while taking a walk with the artist, a number of special guests, our education team and – last but not least – our visitors:

- Sundays, 2–3pm, 31.05. / 14.06. (4.30–5.30pm) / 21.06. / 28.06. / 05.07. / 12.07. / 16.08.
- Thursdays, 6.30–7.30pm, 04.06. / 11.06. / 18.06. / 25.06. / 02.07.

Free entry. In German.

With Daniel Baumann (director), Wilfried Dickhoff (curator and critic, invited), Arthur Fink (freelance curator and art historian), Fredi Fischli & Niels Olsen (co-directors exhibitions ETH Zurich), Thomas Grötz (author and artist), Yannic Joray (artist and curator), Emil Klein (artist), Albert Oehlen (artist), Benjamin Saurer (artist), Magnus Schäfer (art historian, invited), André "Andi" Stutz («Seidenkönig», invited), Urban Zellweger (artist), and others.

Book TV #06 / #07

Books' presentation and public TV-recording (English), a project by Géraldine Beck

- 09.07., 6–7.30pm

Free entry. In English.

BOOK TV is a series of publicly recorded online episodes that present various printed publications.

Programs for kids, schools, and families

Family Afternoon

With Brigit Meier (art educator)

No registration, entry fee 20.- CHF / family

- 07.06., 2–3.30pm

Together with kids, teens and families we will explore the exhibition in a playful way.

Kids Vernissage

Exhibition of children's artwork

- Sunday, June 28, 3pm

Deadline: Thursday, June 25, please send your work to: Kunsthalle Zürich, Limmatstrasse 270, 8005 Zürich

Entry condition: Younger than 18 years, contact information, submissions no larger than A3.

Before the vernissage Albert Oehlen will give a tour at 2pm (free entry).

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Workshops for school classes

With Brigit Meier (art educator)

- 90 min., Mon. or Fri., 9.30am-5pm, free entry, reservation on request:
meier@kunsthallezurich.ch

Do-it-yourself snippy folder with Kids Art Awards

By Carmen Tobler (book designer)

- to take along or download

Find the detailed program on www.kunsthallezurich.ch.

Opening Hours

Tue/Wed/Fri 11 am – 6 pm, Thur 11 am – 8 pm, Sat/Sun 10 am – 5 pm, Mo closed

Please consult the up-to-date information on our website: www.kunsthallezurich.ch

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