

Henning Strassburger

Kenny

1 December 2018 — 26 January 2019

Private View:

Friday 30 November, 6-8pm

Blain|Southern Berlin
Potsdamer Straße 77-87
(Mercator Höfe)
10785 Berlin



Henning Strassburger, *Brian Dance*, 2018
Courtesy the artist and Blain|Southern
Photo: Nick Ash

For his first exhibition with the gallery, Blain|Southern presents new paintings and works on paper by Henning Strassburger (b.1983 Meissen, Germany).

Strassburger's latest series of works entitled *Kenny*, can be seen as the continuation of two earlier series *Pool and Jane*. In all three, he draws references from pop-cultural semantics, where the deliberate adoption of an English word, over the native tongue, loads it with associative meaning.

Strassburger's seemingly spontaneous aesthetic belies a meticulous and pre-planned practice where themes and motifs unfurl across series and over time.

First appearing in the *Pool* works (2014), elements such as the splashes, the grid and the subtle accentuation of the painting's edges now reappear in his latest series. For Strassburger the grid plays an important role, firstly as the structure for most of his paintings, and also as a reoccurring visual motif. The splashes are, at once, gesture and signifier.

The concrete grey gloss floor paint employed in several works here references *Jane*, Strassburger's 2017 series of mixed media works that includes concrete sculptures in the form of the floor-plans to Jane Fonda's house.

Kenny, the title of his new exhibition, refers to the artist's recurring experience when ordering coffee at Starbucks in the US. 'Henning' is consistently misheard as 'Kenny', raising questions around the artist's identity. '*Kenny is me, but of course he isn't*' he says, '*I am a sort of split persona. This is of great interest and fascination to me... Kenny also stands for an aspect of pop-culture, bringing to mind Kenny from Southpark, or Kenny Rogers.*'

It becomes clear, that Henning Strassburger is concerned with the contrast between intention and accident. Contrary to what might seem at first to be spontaneous and expressively created, everything he does is based on concept and calculation. Painting is always the basis, the essence of his work, from which he broadens the field and continues to express the ideas of his paintings in other media. His artistic practise investigates the meaning and parameters of contemporary painting, and its scope for raising questions around mass culture, identity and meaning.

Notes to Editors

The exhibition is running parallel to Mat Collishaw's exhibition *The Grinders Cease*.

About the artist

Henning Strassburger (b.1983) studied in Offenbach, Berlin and Düsseldorf.

Selected solo exhibitions of the artist are: *Fünf Bilder*, Blumenthal, New York, US (2018); *Privacy*, Hofstra University Gallery, New York, US (2017); *M.I.A.E.*, Städtische Galerie Gladbeck, DE (2017); *Bleaching is Teaching*, Kunstverein Reutlingen, DE (2016); *Think Tank*, Kunstverein Oldenburg, DE (2015); *What this does*, Salon Dahlmann, Berlin, DE (2014); *SoftiDrink*, Kunstverein Heppenheim, DE (2011); *Good Old Figuration*, Kunstsammlung Deutsche Bundesbank, Frankfurt am Main, DE (2010); *A Kansas City Shuffle*, Verein für Raum und Form in der bildenden Kunst, Wien, AT (2009); *Die Neue Härte*, Golden Pudel Club, Hamburg, DE (2009). Henning Strassburger lives and works in Berlin.

About Blain|Southern

Blain|Southern is a contemporary art gallery based in London and Berlin. The gallery represents an expanding roster of international artists and is the exclusive representative of the estates of Lynn Chadwick and Avigdor Arikha.

Recent exhibitions include Sean Scully, Ali Banisadr, *Doodle & Disegno*, Moshekwa Langa, Edward Kienholz, Frank Thiel, Liliane Tomasko, Wim Wenders, Marius Bercea, Rachel Howard, Michael Joo and Avigdor Arikha.

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Monday to Friday: 10am - 6pm
Saturday: 10am - 5pm

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