

THOMAS REHBEIN GALERIE : KOELN

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DAMIEN FLOOD / HERBERT WARMUTH

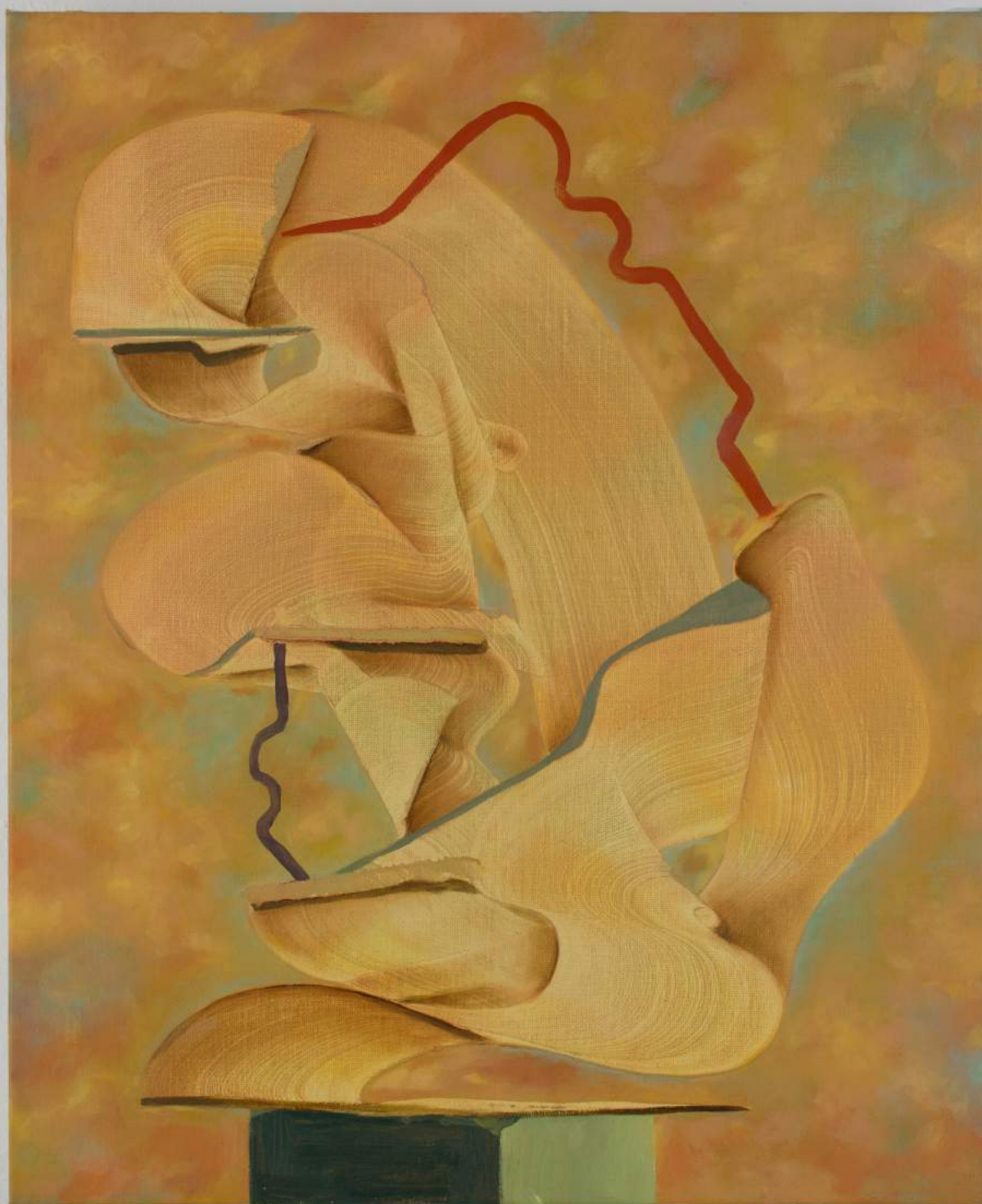
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In Damien Flood's (*1979, Ireland) paintings formal fragments float beyond a continuity of space and consistency of illusion. There is no unifying order to which these single elements can be attached, no congruous narrative into which they are embedded. In fact, the free arrangement of entities and pictorial excerpts proves to be a programmatic statement involving the disintegration of affiliations and thematic boundaries. Whereas some of the „traces“ bear a figurative semblance that allows for a certain degree of recognition, still others remain exempt from any obvious traceable traits and thus removed from any context. These primarily abstract pictorial marks appear to be puzzle pieces on a plain, merely primed canvas surface, loosely recalling a former composition, a patch of paint, or conveying a fleeting impression of reality. Overcoming any objective specificity, inherent in a quick perception of a hand or a vessel, these seemingly familiar forms now appear as primeval pictorial components or even cryptic signs that can be distinguished only through the interaction with their immediate surroundings within the structure of a new pictorial space. In detaching these elements from a previous symbolic realm, they gain independence and valor of their own. Their existence becomes meaningful within a new formative plane, which however remains unstable. Flood's arrangements of disparate fragments seem to illustrate the futility of illusion, emphasizing instead the aspect of painting through multiple stylistic variations, each of these conveying distinct and often conflicting ideas and ideals. A reliable reading based on the unifying story of a „grand narrative“ (Jean-François Lyotard) is undermined.

Due to their color specific compositional structure, the paintings of Herbert Warmuth (*1960, Germany) often recall the appearance of a flag. Their pictorial plane is divided into strictly separated monochrome segments. Some of the blocky stripes prove to be smooth, even color fields, emphasizing the surface without any illusionistic spatial effect. Thus the real conditions and essential prerequisites of painting, reduced to mere color and surface, are visualized here. In turn, other color areas induce an irritation, reaching beyond the essentialist parameters of a self-referential, medium-reflective painting. This manifests itself through disturbances in the surface, which seems to be ruffled and thus engaged in a movement. Such folds and creases are achieved with painterly means, so that in the imitation of materiality the textile quality, the concrete texture of cloth or canvas, is being evoked. This step into a three-dimensional space is realized on the level of depiction. At the same time, such superficial „disturbances“ accentuate the external reality, the autonomous existence of the medium carrying the painting: the canvas stretched on a frame. Herbert Warmuth also ventures into three-dimensionality on the level of objective reality. In former „flag paintings“ seams, and even buttonholes, creases and other signs of wear were often included as part of the fabric's reality, which is draped so as to conceal the shape of the stretcher and directly refers to its obvious purpose as an item of clothing. In recent works, Herbert Warmuth goes one step further, breaking through the medium, slitting plexi glass panes or aluminium panels, in order to squeeze pieces of fabric through the emerging razor-thin openings, so that their ruffles and frills appear to burst through the surface.



Damien Flood
Breeder
2018
Oil on canvas
140 x 180 cm



Damien Flood
New Scent
2018
Oil on canvas
50 x 40 cm



Damien Flood
Shape of Things
2018
Oil on reversed canvas, primed black
80 x 100 cm



Herbert Warmuth
Raum
2018
Acrylic on canvas
60 x 80 cm



Herbert Warmuth
Grün, Gelb, Rosa Weiß durch Violett
2017
Acrylic on plexi glass
179 x 87 cm



Herbert Warmuth
Kopfpaar grau
1993
Acrylic and fabric on wood
66 x 66 cm