

Matthias Dornfeld
CRÈME FRAÎCHE

Matthias Dornfeld lives and works in Berlin. Born in 1960 in Esslingen, he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, where he later held a visiting professorship. In the past he showed his works in solo exhibitions in Chicago, New York, Vancouver and London, among others. Currently, his works can be seen as part of the exhibition “Ungekämmte Bilder” at the Pinakothek in Munich. Solo exhibitions in recent years include “Freud me” at Waldburger Wouters in Brussels, 2023, “L’amour change tout” at Kunstverein Oldenburg, 2022, and “Crème Brulée” at Soy Capitàn in Berlin, 2020. “CRÈME FRAÎCHE” marks his first time showing works at JVDW Gallery.

Dornfeld’s figurative imagery is dominated by motifs such as horses, portraits, and still lifes. Although these evoke certain associations and are not free of art historical connotations, for Dornfeld they function merely as a means to an end for the formal. The renunciation of the claim to want to convey content through motifs creates space for intuitive and unbiased work.

Dornfeld’s working method can be described as an attempt at raw and undisguised spontaneity. In the experiment he sees the possibility of being thrown off course – of missing the mark, but perhaps shooting in the right direction and thus discovering new territory.

Despite the pictorial worlds, some of which can be described as joyfully liberated, there is a deep seriousness in the works, because the intention to free oneself from the constraints of an analytical framework is the result of an intense engagement with painting. Thus, the paintings are created in a kind of conscious loss of control without the hold and certainties of a previous concept, with the aim of discovering the unknown and unexpected.

A first level or trace emerges almost by chance, while a second is deliberately placed above it. Like thesis and antithesis, which find their way onto the canvas and finally become a synthesis in the viewer. Through the open and abstract pictorial language, the viewer is granted a high degree of his or her own creativity and autonomy.

In reduction, Dornfeld sees the possibility of allowing his own worlds of associations to arise in the viewer. His works want neither to pretend nor to explain, but to stimulate and to touch. Something that Dornfeld brings about through radical honesty of himself, which flows into the works.

For Dornfeld, his works are complete when they surprise him, when they amaze, and when they open up previously unseen new worlds.

– Amira Hartmann