

secession

Vereinigung bildender KünstlerInnen Wiener Secession
Friedrichstraße 12, A-1010 Wien
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Press release

Till Megerle

To be kind

December 8, 2020 – February 7, 2021

Grafisches Kabinett

In his exhibition *To be kind*, Till Megerle presents thirteen new drawings from the past three years. The works show scenes involving oddly convoluted and deformed bodies as well as portraits of young people posing before landscapes on the urban periphery that are steeped in an atmosphere of vague alienation and taciturnity. The pictures insistently point up the protean, alien, and psychedelic facets of the quotidian. The familiar is distorted so as to become unreal, uncovering what was repressed or thought to have been overcome and revealing a latent violence that Aziza Harmel addresses in the publication accompanying the exhibition:

“This back and forth between the mundane and the monstrous never manifests in Till’s work for the sake of balance, but rather it is a pursuit of intensity and an acknowledgment of the immanence of violence. Violence here is a double bind that indicates a relationship between the means of living in the current system of governance and the omnipresence of history.”

The figures in the pictures find themselves in literal or figurative strangleholds that they often seem to inflict on themselves. Their physical intensity derives from intertwined moments of playfulness and grotesquerie. The characters are distinguished by a carnivalesque ambivalence that makes them seem both comedic and tragic, both intimate and aloof.

The combination of diverse styles and techniques is a defining characteristic of Megerle’s work. Where his earlier drawings were limited to black-and-white and sepia tones, this exhibition now also features color drawings. Working in charcoal, ink, crayons, and ballpoint pens, he layers dense aggregates of subtle hatching and graduated shading in compositions whose apparent homogeneity gives way to complex internal contradictions as discontinuities of perspective and sometimes caricatural exaggerations come into view. In a series of pictures such as *The House of Sprezzatura* (2019) or the portrait of four women in a stairwell (*Untitled*, 2020), the orchestration of individual hues applied in colored pencil in the areas of solid color yields a shimmering nacreous lucency that is eerily at odds with the figures’ expressions. In a number of other works, meanwhile, the characters’ wrestling or dancing motions are matched by the dynamic of vigorous complementary contrasts; the homogeneity of the planar composition, meanwhile, is disrupted by overlaid autonomous lines in ballpoint pen.

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Megerle's visual studies in the social attributes and standing of his figures take inspiration from historic works of art like the paintings of Pieter Bruegel and Matthias Grünewald, but also from pop-cultural sources such as skateboarding and gabber videos. Most of these widely diverse allusions, however, cannot be traced to an unequivocal reference. Eschewing the postmodernist play with quotations and irony, the artist instead foregrounds the engagement with forms, subjects, and techniques. His creative process is characterized by an arch seriousness. The motivation behind it may be compared to what drives the disaffected teenager who withdraws into his room to pursue a hobby with basic means yet indefatigable meticulousness and passion. The result, in Megerle's case, is an interplay between rigorous form and a semblance of amateurishness that is also discernible in the idiom of his photographs and films and unmistakably anchors his work in the here and now.

A book designed by the artist, with numerous illustrations contextualizing the drawings on view in the show with additional selections from his oeuvre and an essay by Aziza Harmel, will be published in conjunction with the exhibition.

Till Megerle was born in Bayreuth in 1979 and lives and works in Vienna.

The exhibition program is conceived by the board of the Secession.

Curator: Annette Südbeck

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Artist's book**Till Megerle**

Format: 28 x 22 cm (landscape format)

Details: Soft cover, thread binding, dustjacket, 84 pages, ca. 70 illustrations

Concept: Till Megerle

Text: Aziza Harmel

Secession 2020

Distribution: Revolver Publishing

€ 26,40

The artist's book accompanying the exhibition interweaves graphic art with videos. The drawings are made in the solitude of the studio; the videos, by contrast, are the fruit of collaborations with friends. In both media, the artist tells stories of the dynamics of the body and society and raises the question: how does one live (together)? (Till Megerle)

Press contact

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Press images

Installation views are available for download at <https://www.secession.at/en/presstype/aktuell/>

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Association of Visual Artists Vienna Secession
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Till Megerle. *To be kind*

Grafisches Kabinett

Ausstellungsdauer

December 8, 2020 – February 7, 2021

Artist's book

Till Megerle, 84 pages, € 26,40

Opening hours

Tuesday – Sunday 2 – 6 p.m.

Permanent Presentation

Gustav Klimt, *Beethoven Frieze*; *Beethoven – Painting and Music*
in cooperation with the Wiener Symphoniker

Guided tours

Every Saturday at 2 p.m. in German, free of charge (without registration)

Admission

Adults € 9,50 / Pupils, students and senior citizens € 6,-

Youtube

www.youtube.com/channel/UCIinc_V3Uz4C5Ucrb4DtSw

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www.instagram.com/viennasecession/

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