

Raffi Kalenderian – Always in Rare Form

23 February 2018 – 14 April 2018

Opening reception: Friday, 23 February, 7 – 9 Uhr



RAFFI KALENDERIAN
Edgar, 2017
oil on paper
129,5 x 91,4 cm / 51 x 36 in

Buchmann Galerie is delighted to announce its third solo exhibition with Raffi Kalenderian (*1981, lives and works in Los Angeles). We will be presenting new paintings as well as works on paper.

In the exhibition Raffi Kalenderian concentrates exclusively on portraits of people in his own personal circle. Using oils, the painter plumbs the possibilities of the portrait genre with powerful colours and a passion for the textures attainable through oil paint.

The protagonists from Los Angeles' young urban scene pose for the painter sitting or standing in intimate spaces; as a rule, the image sections concentrate on the figure. The models are placed in front of almost psychedelic backgrounds in strong colours. The contrast between figure and background, between model and abstract colour fields gives the images their tension, abstracting the portraits. The brightly colourful patterns of the background are influenced by the quilts of American folk art as well as modernist abstraction, and echoes of Mexican wall hangings may also be found; these are quite prevalent in the culture of Southern California.

Raffi Kalenderian is a *painter of modern life* in the sense defined by Charles Baudelaire in his seminal essay of the same name. He employs painterly means to explore the possibility of illustrating contemporaneity in portrait form. In his essay Baudelaire makes a passionate case for a new, entirely nonacademic understanding of beauty in the depiction of people. Following a rich tradition of portrait art from Matisse to Hockney, Kalenderian succeeds in defining the figures' psychology through the surrounding space, so establishing a universal quality yet lending a complex visualization to the portrait subject. The artists' friends function as motifs of an investigation, therefore, which ranges from painterly issues to considerations of identity and the social, taking up current debates about the self and constructed identities.

Raffi Kalenderian took part in numerous international solo and group exhibitions in the USA and Europe. In 2016 Kalenderian was part of the exhibition *Painters' Painters* at the Saatchi Gallery in London, UK. In 2010 his works were on show at the *Next Generation* exhibition at Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland. Kalenderian graduated in painting from UCLA, California, where he studied under Laura Owens and Yutaka Sone.

For more information about the artist and for images you are welcome to contact the gallery at any time.