

Fiona Rae -

16 September – 5 November, 2016

Opening: Friday, 16 September, 6 - 9 pm

Fiona Rae will be present during the opening.



Figure 2e, 2016
oil on canvas
183 x 129.5 cm / 72 x 51 in

The Buchmann Galerie is delighted to present a solo show with new works by British painter Fiona Rae (*1963 in Hong Kong, lives in London).

In the last 25 years Fiona Rae has created an impressively diverse oeuvre, exploring and expanding abstract painting in her own distinctive and original way.

When talking about her work, she often says she is more interested in the process of painting than in the finished image. This makes perfect sense when we visualize her various groups of work. Rae succeeds repeatedly in developing fresh starting points, out of which the next set of ideas can then evolve. Over the years, six or seven series of paintings have emerged in this way.

The paintings in this exhibition provide an insight into the most recent group of works by Fiona Rae, begun in 2014 with a number of charcoal drawings. These drawings were presented in the Buchmann Box in autumn 2014. It is fascinating to be able to see the path the artist has followed since then.

All the large paintings have a narrow vertical format, seldom used before by Rae, and measure 183 x 129.5 cm. This makes it possible for the painter to maintain control over the entire canvas from a single standpoint; she is able to cover the whole canvas with one sweep of a brush.

The intense calligraphic lines radiate with the same force from the canvas as we find in the drawings. They seem spontaneous and yet at the same time placed with discipline and precision. In a comparable way to the works on paper, the new paintings also seem to have evolved in one energetic spell of activity; they have very few overpainted areas. Accordingly, Rae works on only one painting at a time, in contradistinction to earlier series where paintings would often be developed simultaneously.

Another definitive difference from all the other groups of works to date is the exclusive use of black, white and grey in several works. The reduction of the colour palette brings an almost liberating effect, creating a new concentration and dynamism in the constellation of figure and ground, surface and line. It is interesting that Rae, after producing an initial group of greyscale paintings, has proceeded to re-introduce colour in parallel with this approach, albeit with colours that are far more restrained than in many previous paintings. Despite these changes, Fiona Rae's signature remains clearly recognizable in these new works, evidence of the many visual codes and tropes she has developed and made her own over the years.

As regards the titles for the new paintings, the painter has again decided in favour of a novel approach. After having given poetic titles to the paintings in the previous series, such as *Maybe you can live on the moon in the next century* or *The very once-in-a-lifetime moment*, Rae now uses a taxonomic system for the new paintings: *Figure 1a*, *Figure 1b*, etc. In this way she creates a distance between the painting and the title, enabling us to concentrate on contemplating the pure painting.

These new paintings make clear what Fiona Rae means when she says: "I see these paintings as suggesting the presence of a figure, whilst simultaneously insisting on its absence; the paintings remain abstract. I want the urgency of paint marks and gestures made only by the hand; the need to make a mark that goes back thousands of years."

Works by Fiona Rae are represented in numerous public collections, amongst them the Tate Collection UK, the Centre Pompidou Paris, the Hamburger Bahnhof Berlin, the Hirshhorn Museum Washington D.C. and the Mudam Luxembourg.

For additional information on the artist or for visual materials on the works in the exhibition, please do not hesitate to contact the gallery at any time.