

Veit Laurent Kurz
Omen – Scenes From An Unwritten Play
10.11.–17.12.2022

“The ongoing trend of figurative painting continues to occupy a wide space in the landscape of contemporary painting. Conversations regarding technical skill, composition and symbolism once carried by renaissance masters seem to be a revisited phenomena, especially among younger generations. Perhaps as both a counteraction as well as a product of rapid technological change which has led to an immersive image culture, figuration anchors an identification with the human painter painting under the shadow of the CGI. Against the historic model of works commissioned by the church or patron, where the painter painting has the agency to elect its subject, one wonders for whom these works are intended and further, to what degree are these new images authentic? Do they even need to be?” -B.B. Beuy

Weiss Falk is happy to present *Omen – Scenes From An Unwritten Play*, Veit Laurent Kurz's fourth solo presentation with the gallery. On view is a selection of paintings from a broader body of work that the artist made in 2008 and which subsequently remained unfinished until earlier this year. Initially these works were realized as a painted script for an envisioned play or movie. These early paintings bring together elements of architecture, set design, as well as early versions of characters that reappear in Kurz's later works over the years, eventually forming an Alter Ego. The paintings capture sequences and activities that occur in a theatrically staged environment, within which the plot is deliberately obscured. The viewer can only access a haunting presence of delayed, yet scripted, outcome.

Realized in a small studiospace in Offenbach, Kurz meticulously worked on this series until his enrollment in Frankfurt's Städelschule in 2009. At that point in his artistic development Kurz had merely a provisional and perhaps even immature concept of contemporary art and painting; consequently, the conceptual considerations of the Städelschule program, which disavowed naive intuition in favor of the cold hard facts left an intimidating impression which stalled the completion of the works for over a decade. The artist felt insecure. Until early 2022 the unfinished works were stored in his parents garden house in the countryside south of Frankfurt where they collected dust and spiderwebs. In retrospect, after a decade of contemplation, Kurz, with the advantage of maturity and distance, presently describes his early painterly expression as a childish and spiritual exploration. Rather than burden his personal past with obsolete inquiry, such as, „is this really painting?“ Kurz has relieved his younger self, and presently understands these works as illustrations painted on canvas. Only the eye and taste of the beholder with their knowledge of both painting and its well traced history can make this distinction. Those early paintings can be interpreted as a methodological archetype for Kurz's subsequent practice, particularly his attitude towards figuration: understood as the creative momentum drawn between the lines of skepticism and belief. The presentation of “Omen, Scenes From An Unwritten Play” can be seen as Kurz's personal reflection on an earlier self as well as an opening towards his more recent figurative modes. Revisiting a moment wherein art making was powered by intuition and subconscious expression he sees the possibility of inner freedom, personal respite, as well as an entrance into an unknown territory.

When the artist considers them self, their personal history, as saccarinely reflected in the above text, they feel a necessity to acknowledge that the decision to share these personal works is not merely the intention too display older works which anchor their present moves in figuration. The point is not to say ‚I have been doing this since 2008 and this is where it all started,‘ as if that were a legitimizing register for any of it. The point is to make use of the confrontational and public space that the act of exhibition making delivers, to motivate a reconnection with previous versions of selves, to pressure a return to this earlier state, to grasp and grapple with a seed in formation in order to genuinely ask: what are the emergent conditions that allow oneself to both initiate and sustain a decade-long commitment towards the above articulated tendency? Where, when, and how is it that the fragile seed finds this necessary energy?