

Galerie Francesca Pia

This city Is

Jenna Bliss
Hans-Christian Lotz
Alan Michael
Sam Pulitzer
Gili Tal

Opening Friday, June 11, 11–21
June 12 – September 11, 2021

The group exhibition *This city Is* investigates profound changes in today's urban and civil society and their repercussions on our subjective, everyday experiences. The works of the exhibiting artists take a critical look at the mechanisms of image production and distribution and examine the signs and materialities in which contemporary mechanisms manifest themselves.

Alan Michael's (*1967) painting is characterized by the repetition of style and motifs. Since the early 2000s, Michael has been investigating the photorealism of the 1960s, the iconography of which rested on the optimistic belief in a capitalism that presupposed grand promises of endless resources and prosperity. By transporting contemporary everyday motifs into this particular aesthetic of realism, the artist creates an esthetic space in his paintings that no longer refers to the heroic depiction of the capitalist system, but, rather, to the endless and hollow circulation of affects and goods associated with the everyday medium of photography and its functionalities.

Visual elements of public space also inform the drawings, objects, and spatial installations of Sam Pulitzer (*1984). He references advertising graphics, economic charts, public pronouncements, and motifs from illustrated children's books and juxtaposes these with found or self-authored text elements. The result are complex and ambiguous collages in which Pulitzer reflects on the relationship between moral and material values.

In her photographs, collages, and installations, the artist Gili Tal (*1983) probes the relationship between capitalist-oriented urban developments and the realities of those inhabiting them. Tal is particularly interested in the growing amalgamation of advertising images and effective reality. Her two new works *Window (Winter)* evoke visions of urban modular glass facades, in which weather, light, and shadows are reflected. At the same time, her digital prints recall an open browser window on a screen. It remains unclear whether these images represent a view of an outside space or a form of introspection, if they signify urban architecture or a digital surface. This ambivalence highlights the complex reciprocal effect between the actual experience of urban reality and its simulated representation.

The exhibition also includes three prints and a film by Jenna Bliss (*1984). The artist and filmmaker primarily works with heterogeneous, found, and self-produced material, the specific codes and semiotics of which Bliss unites in montages to reveal historical connections and the contingency of their embedded mechanisms and ideologies. The three photographic prints in the exhibition are based on a Super 8mm recording of the *Tribute in Light*, the two beams of light the City of New York projected into the sky to commemorate 9/11. As the light fields were invisible in the original black and white film material, the graphic patterns on the can be regarded as abstract replicas. By etching into the Super8mm positive, Bliss developed the missing light fields in the negative space. Negation and abstraction concur in these photographic drawings. The film *New York New York* constitutes the conceptual, real counterpart to the negative abstraction of the photographic series.

The work of Hans-Christian Lotz (*1980) is based on the ordinary objects, architectural elements, and technologies we encounter daily in public space. The two exhibited wall objects consist of industrial aluminum profiles, such as those used for the construction of industrial plants, 3D

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printers, or CNC milling machines. The objects' frames consist of the same elements as the ornamental motifs they contain. Behind the pseudo-Moorish opulence of their ornamentation, the conceptual pragmatism of these pictorial objects demonstrates, above all, the self-centeredness and standardized unity of the technical systems from which the material of the work originates.