

The Incident Ray
Sebastian Haas & Sebastian Burger
curated by Domenico de Chirico
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K A L I
G A L L E R Y

Tending towards a faultless and, as far as possible, impartial evolution of human knowledge, and guided by an incidental, Augustinian ray that springs from a powerfully bright source, *"The Incident Ray"* leads us to deeply reflect both on man's own gaze upon himself and his ability—at once mendacious and reliable—to be impressed by reality.

The reality referred to is that of a modern society in which images are incontrovertibly understood as mystification aimed at justifying the prevailing social relations of production, as theorized by the writer and philosopher Guy Debord in his 1967 essay entitled *"The Society of the Spectacle."* Debord addresses the separation of images from life and indeed that pivotal moment when we begin to consider spectacle as "the inversion of life" and that "entertainment is not a set of images, but a social relationship between individuals, mediated by images." Questioning all this, "The Incident Ray" vividly hopes that the aforementioned imaginative light—upright, saving, intense, and luminous may soon intervene to uplift the fortunes of this hyper-technological, post-truth "chained modern society," which to this day seems unwilling to consent to the legitimization of the extraordinary and peculiar authenticity of social relations between individuals. According to such precepts, here and ready to interact are the works of German artist Sebastian Burger (*1980) and Swiss Sebastian Haas (*1992).

Sebastian Burger's ambivalent art practice egregiously retraces that fine line between figurative and abstract painting. The starting point of his work consists of an endless series of stylized images, often composed in a manner similar to that of collage, alternating between precisely executed illusionism and skillful two-dimensional representation. Heavily inspired by surrealism and magical realism, as well as by the metaphysical painting of Giorgio de Chirico, Burger generously gives us new and surprising images. They are to be understood as sediments of meaning derived from a multitude of references that, in turn, in order to be comprehended require a boldly intuitive approach. All his works, definable as pictorialist films, primarily make light and then space, color and form, their total scope. Of undoubted skill and technique, they serve as the complex aesthetic systems within which the dialectic of cross-references between all elements becomes more and more pressing, to the point of suggesting the existence of a time when the shadows, gestures, poses, and color variations falter in an endless pause.

Focusing on the fateful relational dimension between the viewer and the artwork, **Sebastian Haas** champions the so-called reverse painting practice, or rather that which is performed on the back of the used surface, in this case of glass plates, so as to be able to achieve an iridescent distortion in the experience of one's own reflection during the vision of the work itself.

What ensues is an alteration of images and sensations that occurs at first intentionally and then progresses in an entirely natural way. Between fragility and power, unintelligible and descriptive, alteration and permanence, inwardness and sharing, desire and awe, horizon and barrier, his sculptures constantly reach out for a spontaneous interaction with the natural light so they can perform unconditionally in a vital prismatic, unpredictable and engaging show in which reflection leads the viewer to a confrontation with both the innermost “self” and one’s mirror image, in the prying eyes of the other.

Domenico de Chirico
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