

OOLONG GALLERY



Opening Jan 18 6-8pm

Oolong Gallery Presents

Addendum Show by **Marcel Eichner**

01/17 – 02/02, 2025

Oolong Gallery presents an addendum show for Marcel Eichner that opens Saturday, January 18 with a reception from 6—8pm in Rancho Santa Fe. This exhibit will be on view for two weeks and features new paintings as well as selections from his large-scale, short-lived exhibition 'On a knife's edge' at SWC Art Gallery that closed January 12. Eichner is the first artist in residence having traveled here from Berlin, Germany where Oolong owner / director Eric Laine partially grew up. This opening also celebrates Laine's 48th birthday with the 23rd exhibition he has curated and produced in San Diego, CA since June, 2022.

The gallery is donating 10% of sales to the Grief & Hope [gofundme](#) to support artists and arts workers in LA affected by the devastating wildfires:

This fund was created this week by a group of five artists and art professionals, including the Various Small Fires director Ariel Pittman, the artists Andrea Bowers and Kathryn Andrews (the latter of whom lost her home last week to the Palisades fire and a previous home to the Bobcat Fire of 2020). Grief and Hope has already raised nearly \$300,000 toward its \$500,000 goal, with the aim of evenly distributing the first round of funds by the end of January to the artists and art workers—such as “kiln operators, studio assistants” and more, says Pittman—who meet very basic criteria for losses. The fund will also accept tax deductible donations exceeding \$10,000 directed through its non-profit sponsor, the Brick.

Marcel Eichner was born in 1977, in Siegburg, Germany. From 1998 to 2004 he studied at the Kunstakademie, Dusseldorf, under Professor Jorg Immendorff, and now lives and works in Berlin.

"There are artists who demonstrate early in life an uncanny feeling for the fluid wanderings of a drawn line which directs their imagination and intimate dreams. Eichner's line meanders on the canvas, creating as it passes fragile personages and

grotesque creatures, and when it rests there is a world filled with nightmarish scenes and mad demons. Fortunately, a glimmer of humor within these complex, imaginative compositions gives us a reprieve from the chaos and intensity within.

It does not feel like a rational, organized universe, but rather one in which everything is in freefall; perspective, scale, objects with an almost manic force running the show. However, the composition and line keep everything under control and balance within the canvases. There are echoes of Grosz, Klee, Ensor. Evidence of psychological revelations in painting are more in keeping with a 20th century European tradition of analysis, but in this respect Eichner has a connection to Jackson Pollack's intuitive search for form and line to express his subconscious feelings. Eichner's paintings have a powerful abstract presence, with a refined sense of color and line, creating a web of intriguing content on a mysterious stage."

— David McKee (2013), Eichner and early Guston dealer in NY 1974-2015

Translated from German, Nicole Hackert in the CFA catalog *Marcel Eichner '8 x Elmer'* :

"Indeed, many of his paintings exude a claustrophobic atmosphere. The Cast of these paintings is often a little too large or oversized for the pictorial space. Often they are in the midst of movement, alone or together, that might cause them to hit their heads at the edge of the painting, or to scrape their knee.

Spaces: If we attempt to describe the picture in a classical manner, we find ourselves asking where exactly these freaks on Marcel Eichner's paintings are frolicking. From time to time, attributes like doors or windows signal that they are located inside, in a room. But this illusionary space is destroyed by creatures that seem to break through the walls and the ceiling and suddenly present their grotesque faces to us. Then again, there are scenes that in terms of the paintings' structure suggest that they take place outside. Extreme size differences between the protagonists indicate an exterior space in terms of perspective, where the larger figures would have to be located in the foreground, and the smaller one further back. But then the artist includes a detail that would situate the setting in an interior space — for example, a ceiling lamp — and then nothing is right anymore as far as perspective is concerned. Eichner couldn't care less about spatial perspective and illusion, he is interested in pictorial spaces. This becomes evident when Eichner has one figure, a "Zorro" type, walk along the edges of a canvas.

I ask the artist how he begins. He tells me he first pours paint and ink on the canvas — sometimes consciously, sometimes accidentally. And then he lets the painting do its thing. Depending on whatever the painting has done, Eichner then intervenes in the process. The figures are given contours in ink, or scratched into the acrylic paint, i.e. they are more drawn than painted, and thus they seem like ciphers for things human or animal. They are not modeled, but remain rather flat, without volume and without the reassurance of anatomical correctness — which he actually frowns upon. Looking at photographs or images of other artists is anyway forbidden while he paints. It has to be done quickly, hence ink or acrylic paint and not oils. Sometimes the painting overtakes the artist, the figures practically invent or paint themselves, start to interact, and force spontaneous reactions. Then a compositional intervention on the part of the painter takes place, which gives the figures a new orientation and allows them to pursue new activities.

That sounds almost a little like slapstick — along the lines of “it paints”, or “higher beings command”. Eichner also has to put up with the oft-quoted kitsch about “the fight with the canvas”. Because when you see the paintings and listen to the artist speak about them, you actually do get the notion that somebody orchestrates or mediates between powers over which he has only limited influence. Giving up control and tripping himself up from time to time in the painting process, so that things stay exciting, that is after all his motto. Hence the right-handed artist sometimes also paints using his left hand.”

CV