



SWC Art Gallery



Marcel Eichner

On a knife's edge
2014 – 2024

OOLONG GALLERY

Annex Exhibition: Dec 21—Jan 11

Opening Saturday Dec 21 2—4pm

Presented by SWC Art Gallery

**Southwestern College
Room 88-101
900 Otay Lakes Rd
Chula Vista, CA 91910
+1 858 229 2788
info@oolonggallery.com**

Marcel Eichner has arrived with Oolong Gallery in San Diego, CA from Berlin, Germany and will be present for the duration of the exhibition with an artist talk on January 12 from 2—4pm.

To do a dangerous thing with style is what I call art.
— Charles Bukowski

Please join us Saturday December 21 from 2—4pm *Southwestern College Art Gallery* for a festive presentation of the artist's paintings spanning the last ten years. The site could not be more appropriate in that the historic art gallery there was conceived decades ago as a homage to the original Whitney Museum building with the iconic brutalist, concrete, and modular formed ceiling. This annex exhibition was curated by Oolong owner, director Eric Laine to showcase larger scale work by also bringing a major German painter to San Diego for the public to enjoy over the holidays. The show is made possible by SWC gallery director and artist Nikko Mueller, as well as Southwestern College where John Baldessari once taught. Further thanks goes to Irene Cassina of Milan, Italy's Cassina Projects for releasing older work from the archive in NY to be presented for the first time in California.

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. (from his McKee Gallery press release in 2013, a NY based Guston dealer 1974-2015)

Recent solo exhibitions include:

2022 Marcel Eichner: Neue Bilder, CFA, Contemporary Fine Arts, Berlin, Germany
2021 "W", Haverkamp Gallery, Berlin, Germany
2020 Me, Haverkamp Gallery, Berlin, Germany
2019 Paintings and Drawings 2009-2019, Cassina Projects, Milan, Italy
2017 Good Enough, Haverkamp Gallery, Berlin, Germany; Point Blank, James Fuentes, New York, USA 2015 Marcel Eichner, James Fuentes, New York, NY
2014 McKee Gallery, New York, NY; Akt mit vier Beinen, Contemp. Fine Arts, Berlin, Germany
2013 McKee Gallery, New York, NY; Die Villa Schöningen Bilder, Villa Schöningen, Potsdam, Germany
2012 Marcel Eichner, Contemporary Fine Arts, Berlin, Germany
2010 8x Elmer, Contemporary Fine Arts, Berlin, Germany.

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."

Oolong Gallery

6030 La Flecha, Rancho Santa Fe, CA 92067

Telephone +1 858 229 2788

www.oolonggallery.com