

# Maximilian Rödel

FORTUNATOR

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## FORTUNATOR

Maximilian Rödel's solo exhibition bears the title FORTUNATOR and is accompanied by a watercolor paperwork. The artist's watercolor shows the cartoon character "Roger" from the American television cartoon "American Dad". Roger is an eccentric, gender-neutral alien who lives incognito in a stereotyped American family. The alien, dressed as a lady, becomes a figure of the artist with a brush in its hand. The figure allegorizes the outsider, the incomprehensible, that society harbors. Following this logic, the title FORTUNATOR could refer to the homonymous alter ego of Gladstone Gander from the Donald Duck comics who mostly fights for the good, but always pursues selfish purposes. Historically considered, the mythological reference of the title is "Fortuna", the Roman goddess of luck and fate; she might stand diametrically opposed to it. The ambivalence inherent in the imaged character as well as the references to high- and pop culture could be considered as metaphorical analogies to contemporary painting. Above here we should ask ourselves: what do we want from art? Or, to quote Roger at this point: "So on a scale from 0 to Lestat: how do you see me?"

Considering those ambivalences in the discourse of contemporary painting, Isabel Graw succeeded in describing a genealogy of painting that averted the idea of beginning and ending in that genre – both historically and spatially. Presently it is obvious that painting also adapts to the conditions of our time and yet does not degenerate: it persists. In this regard, contemporary art theory attempts to define a concept of painting that, without losing its specificity, frees itself from the once-paradigms of painterly designation.

In his exhibition, Maximilian Rödel shows a series of seven colorful large formats that each build their own color logic. The artist works simultaneously on several canvases and thus seeks and finds comparatively, purely intuitive the inherent logic of the respective work. Green-blue is followed by orange-yellow, from pink-red to a 'colorless' gray-black, Rödel lists a wide range of color scales in his works. This latest series can be seen as a continuity that has become a confrontation with the pure color, coming from previously set, so-called 'prehistoric sunsets', or the older series of 'supposedly monochrome' canvases. In doing so, Rödel preserves his abstraction and technical interests. He textures his works in his own manner, creating a dynamic in each, that requires duration in its perception. He also succeeds in opening up a space in the picture whose depth, like a pull, miraculously lies in those surfaces. The works seem to argue more directly in their respective colors, using color scales from fashion and advertising industries. Rödel consciously distances the chromaticity from natural colors and perverts the idea of an abstract landscape painting – and he's doing it not at all "in the sense of...". Forcibly searching for paradigms to define perpetuation, does not seem to be the way to capture that progression unclouded. Furthermore, the unitary format of the canvases appears almost square, almost corporeal, almost intangible, but imperatively almost. Coming from no insecurity – on the contrary: it is a well-considered, set format that eludes a clear relation and likes to dwell on it.

Well? What do we want to see?

Perhaps Maximilian Rödel's paintings are poetic expression, clever withdrawal as well as emotional charge. Perhaps they are just as pragmatic as they are spiritual and implicitly free as well as constructed.

Luisa Schlotterbeck