



## HANSPETER HOFMANN

### Responsive Eye Responsive Brain

**Opening: 29/06/2005, 7 p.m.**

Duration of exhibition: 30/06/2005 - 30/07/2005, August on appointment

#### Press release

On the one side there is the interest in painting, in its history and its ambitions – also in matters of society, on the other side there is the will to optimise a product. The longing to separate both is going on, especially in Europe where still a *more* is forced upon art – a more that has long evolved into something different. At first Hanspeter Hofmann's art has been counted among abstract painting, later – in consideration of the artist's biography – it has been related to chemistry and cell forms. Around the year 2000 Hofmann began to paste words, birds, and skulls onto his paintings, leaving the enigmatic *more* of abstraction behind, disturbing the absolute pictorial space and instead establishing it as a product. During the last two years he has been boosting this effect by airbrushing figures of snakes and portraits of celebrities on top of his finished paintings. Being linked to youth and pop culture, the acts of humiliation and ennoblement are vastly tightened, and Hofmann's pictures function in an atmosphere of abstraction and marketing.

Certainly, all those ways of interpretation are legitimate.

At his exhibition "Responsive Eye – Responsive Brain" at the Engholm Engelhorn Gallery in Vienna Hofmann shows a choice of new works arranged in front of a background specially designed for this occasion: Details of his netlike images are enlarged and drawn in white chalk on several grand black surfaces functioning as background for the new paintings. Obviously the first part of the title refers to the famous exhibition "Responsive Eye", 1965 at the MOMA in New York, which established Op Art on an international level. The second part, "Responsive Brain", suggests that visual perceptions and also colours are not only "processed" by the brain, but it is the brain itself that constructs them.

Surely, the eye will get lost in Hofmann's paintings, will immerse deeply into the abstract space, seeking the absolute sensation that the abstract painting has ever been dreaming of. Just like the surfer sliding on the perfect wave that squeezes to a single point, the wave where the nothing is all. However, if the brain not only processes, but constructs those sensations this frenzy can be nothing but a jaunty construction. Or – like Hofmann would answer – just like abstract painting it can only be a sophisticated product.

Daniel Baumann

**Hanspeter Hofmann** was born at Mitlödi / Switzerland in 1960, living and working at Basel.

A selection of his latest exhibitions is "Echorausch", Galerie Schmidt Maczollek, Cologne (2005), "Flashback", Kunstverein Freiburg, Freiburg (2005) "fosbury flop", Galerie Jamileh Weber, Zurich (2004), "Stoked", Kunstverein Freiburg, Freiburg (2004), "Malerei", Kunstverein Arnsberg e.V., Arnsberg, Germany (2004), "Supercritical Fluids", Kunsthhaus Glarus, Glarus, Switzerland (2003), "Toxic", Max Protetch, New York (2003), Kunsthalle Basel (2001), "Künstlerräume/Sammlerräume", Kunstmuseum St. Gallen (2001).

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