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Press information

Kirsi Mikkola | *Abschied der Lumpenliese*

November 1, - December 3, 2011

Opening: October 29, 2011, 6-9 pm

carlier | gebauer is happy to announce the second solo exhibition of Finnish painter Kirsi Mikkola entitled *Abschied der Lumpenliese* (Panhandler's Farewell). Mikkola, who is based in Berlin, has been with the gallery since the early 1990s, but her artistic practice has taken a fundamental turn in the last years, which was first represented in her last solo exhibition with the gallery in 2010. For the last years, Mikkola has been working on the terms of a painterly praxis, which pushes its own boundaries in front of the perceiver's eyes, making beautifully and painfully visible, that it defines painting as its territory but never lets itself be limited by its conventions. Mikkola proposes an artist-centered art – a painterly praxis of material thought, a re-materialization of art.

In *Abschied der Lumpenliese*, Mikkola presents rectangular and round tableaux, on which colored strips of paper and fields of deepening color palettes are brought into agitated relations. Her paintings are abstract, because Mikkola has used the utmost force to drive any form of figuration out of them. In that, her work might be compared to that of the early Francis Bacon, an artistic practice, which is driven by the urge to formulate an argument rather than an oeuvre, a stance rather than a representation. Where in Bacon, figuration was cut wide open, being torn apart by the abstraction shooting through it, in Mikkola the figuration is transmuted. In her paintings, she sets up confrontations and affinities of color and form, which she forces to loose those figurative allusions, which would help to perceive her paintings as pacified entities open for aesthetic contemplations. Mikkola works with the beautifications inherent to color and form but describes her own process of production not so much as one of finishing and encapsulating a harmonized entity in the painting, but rather as an act of concentrated eruption. Her works are at their best where they are cracking wide open, void of any anchors or points of identification. They leave the artist's studio when they have insistently refused conciliation.

Mikkola's art rises from a commitment to the production of her medium. Her turn towards painting has been encompassed by an intricate knowledge of its history and its contemporaneities, which seizes its powers to perform an ongoing disintegration: of the norms found within, of the standards and of the visualization of her medium, its dematerialization into a merely conceptual image-source. Mikkola puts forward a dedication to painting's materiality, which she enhances in dissecting it into painter paper strips, which are held together and torn apart by fields and peaks of color, a frontal, much more corporeal and literal approach.

In *Abschied der Lumpenliese* at carlier | gebauer, Mikkola shows new works only, because how else could she demonstrate her argument in such a precise, punctuated and powerful way? She withstands the temptations that a conscious artistic turn towards instituting an oeuvre offers – and chooses to stay alert, to relentlessly reformulate her paintings in paper and color as confrontational breaks, cracking wide open in front of their audience.