

Jan Merta

Geist und Materie

14th May until 19th June 2010

Opening: Wednesday, 12th May, 7.00 – 9.00 p.m.

Jan Merta indisputably counts among the most significant contemporary artists of the Czech Republic. His work was recently celebrated by a successful retrospective exhibition at the Wannick Gallery in Brno (25.9.2009-31.1.2010). Having already exhibited at the Rüdiger Schöttle Gallery in 2004 and 2006, Jan Merta will now be showing new works at his forthcoming exhibition under the title *Geist und Materie*.



Jan Merta, Ein Europäer, 2009

Jan Merta's works focus on simple pictorial motifs drawn from everyday life, which though a process of abstraction and alienation acquire a complexity and enigmaticness that transcend the commonplace. But depth of content in no way means a neglect of form: transparent, everyday objects or architectonic fragments, seemingly dissolving in the artist's brushwork, are placed against monochrome or blended backgrounds. Jan Merta renounces the clear separation of figure and ground in favour of their complex merging and interpenetration. Finely abstracted details are combined with the representational in such a way that traditional motifs – still lifes, portraits, landscapes etc. – assume an enigmatic and at times underlying humorous or ironic quality.



Jan Merta, Echt II, 2008

The use of colour is of central importance to Jan Merta's compositions: garish colours are combined with subdued shades, as in *Ein Europäer*, for example, a work dominated by the bright red plumage of a bird of prey against a background of pink, green and blue tones.

Jan Merta's work *Echt II* combines typographical and symbolic elements. As is the case with all of the artist's works, the viewer needs a certain time in order to grasp the hidden meaning of the painting, a meaning that in many cases is revealed only through the title.

The main work of the exhibition, and the one that gives the exhibition its title, is the painting *Geist und Materie* from 2008/2009. Measuring 195 x 430 cm, this work will certainly be the dominant exhibit.

Jan Merta was born in Sumperk, Czech Republic, in 1952. He lives and works in Prague.