

## PRESS RELEASE



## ROLF BEHM DEFENDING LIGHT

Painter's Luggage - Chimeras

Goethestraße 2-3, 10623 Berlin  
Entrance B across the courtyard

11 March 2016 - 1 May 2016  
Opening: 11 March, 6 - 9 pm



Rolf Behm, Kleines Malergepäck III, 2014  
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Bernet Bertram, Berlin

**Bernet Bertram** is pleased to invite you to the exhibition of new paintings and collages by Rolf Behm. This exhibition marks the opening of the gallery at Goethestraße 2-3 in Berlin, Charlottenburg.

**Rolf Behm** is an artistic personality whose works have continually been exhibited in the German contemporary art scene as well as internationally since the late 1970's. In particular the Berlin gallery owner Rudolf Springer has presented Behm's works - his drawings, sculptures and paintings - over a period of ten years starting in 1984.

Behm uses a bright range of colors capable of transporting light and places color signals with the intention of passing them on to the viewer. He has developed a serial work method to exploit his various themes since the beginning of his career. He starts with small sketchbooks and goes from his initial work on paper on to paintings in small, medium and large formats. The **Chimeras** Behm developed between 2011 and 2014 are dedicated to the ancient mythical creature that is composed of three incompatible animals (a goat, a lion and a snake). It is a symbol of simulacrum, nebulosity and the terrifying. In his creation, the imagined *Schimärenland* (Country of Chimeras), many of these rare creatures congregate as a *Chimärengeometrie* (Geometry of Chimeras), as *Schimgas* (garden chimeras) or as *Mona Lisa Chimera*. Behm unveils a graceful beauty in them and faces their insidiousness with poetry and humor. He tackles these mixed creatures with his mixing technique by materializing the unfamiliarity of the unfathomable yet graspable appearance and incorporating them into the work process itself. Incompatible elements are put in relation with each other through the use of sponge, pigments, acrylic, oil, thickeners and solvents on a transparent background. The application of emulsion paints on top of oil and vice versa changes the spatial levels in the painting – the foreground recedes and the background emerges as a rough surface.

This is exemplified in his latest series **Painter's Luggage**, in which the shape of the suitcase defines the canvas. Initially the title creates an association with the romantic image of a painter, who moves out into the world to explore it. Rolf Behm, himself a transatlantic traveller, explores this theme with a fresh eye, utilizing as a new medium the abstracting view of a metal detector in the airports of the world that X-rays the on-board luggage.

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On the screens appear everyday things like bottles, flasks and hazardous materials as geometrical and linear scans in intensive colors. These objects are sometimes softly outlined and exorbitantly transparent, sometimes sharply cut out and clearly delineated. This complexity and ambiguity accommodates Behm as a painter. He responds to it artistically and incorporates all those emotions, experiences and thoughts in his **Painter's Luggage** that characterize his body of paintings with regard to structure, colors and shapes. Behm reinforces the radiance of his visual elements by including external elements in his composition. In the "Papier collé" tradition he adds colorful pieces of paper, applications like photos, labels and packaging materials to create a contrast between smooth and hard surfaces. Just like he does in his **Chimeras**, Rolf Behm establishes a pictorial abstraction that maintains its relationship to the material world and increases in that way the experience of art.

## Artist Talks with Rolf Behm

**Wednesday, 6 April 2016, 7 pm**

**Saturday, 30 April 2016, 7 pm**

on occasion of the Gallery Weekend Berlin

**Rolf Behm** was born in 1952 in Karlsruhe. He lives and works in Berlin and Rio de Janeiro. He studied fine arts at the Kunstakademie Karlsruhe with Professor Markus Lüperts. He received a DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) scholarship in 1977 and the Villa Romana Fellowship of Florence in 1984. Rolf Behm's works have been shown in solo and group exhibitions in Germany and abroad since the 1970's. From 1985 until 1996 his works were regularly shown at the Galerie Springer and other galleries in Berlin. Other exhibitions took place in Düsseldorf, Karlsruhe, Augsburg, Wiesbaden, St. Petersburg, Paris (FIAC), Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Washington and at the Howard Scott Gallery in New York City. Behm's work is also represented in numerous collections, such as the Würth Collection, Ernst & Young, Essen and the Kunsthalle Mannheim.

The gallery **Bernet Bertram** is located in the former post office, Goethestr. 2-3, along with other galleries and project spaces. It brings together a variety of genres to explore different aesthetic fields of interaction. The program at the gallery focuses on classical modernism and contemporary fine arts. It shows works of artists who grapple with issues of time, media reality and conceptions of the future. The directors **Christian Bertram** and **Dr. Simone Bernet** have realized extensive cultural projects such as the interdisciplinary event series Medium Taut in Berlin, theater productions like Pierre Klossowski's *La Monnai vivante* as a theatrical installation, Robert Walser's *Mikrogramme* as polyscenic theater as well as the premiere of Herman Melville's *Clarel*. With the opening of the gallery they continue their cooperation of many years.

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Goethestr. 2-3

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Entrance B across the courtyard

## OPENING TIMES

**Tue - Fri 12 am - 6 pm, Sat 12 pm - 4 pm  
and by appointment.**

**Longer opening times during  
the Gallery Weekend Berlin**

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