

Press release

MILANA NOVČIĆ
ROLF BEHM
ZHAO MENGJUN

GRACEFULLY PAINTED
Painting and drawings

November 25, 2023 - January 27, 2024
Opening: November 24, 2023, 7 - 9 pm

Goethestrasse 2,
10623 Berlin, Charlottenburg
Entrance B via the courtyard

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Milana Novčić, Brrrr, 2020
Courtesy: The artist and Galerie Bernet Bertram

We are pleased to draw your attention to the exhibition with works by Milana Novčić, Rolf Behm and Zhao Mengjun. *GRACEFULLY PAINTED* presents gracefully painted and drawn abstractions on canvas and paper.

Milana Novčić is concerned with the sensuality of memory, the phenomenon of repetition and the expansion of time. An approach that the artist also follows in other media, photography, video art or performance. In her colorful paintings as well as in her drawings, she pushes figuration all the way to abstraction. Portraits, faces, landscapes shine and light up in mixed media, as in the large-format work *Brrrr* and *The Face* (2021).

Rolf Behm continues his engagement with Dante Alighieri's motifs in new works inspired by the *Divine Comedy*, which began with an exhibition series in 2021/2022. The shapes of eyes and looks become the focus of his pictures. With spray paint, Behm creates young and fresh tones in contrast to the mixed tones of oil and acrylic paints, uses them as a final increase in color or simply as a bright, luminous background - a typical feature of Rolf Behm's painting. Behm's colorful exhibits, *Blickpunkt-Da-2023*, illustrate the relevance and diversity of the subject, which can be discovered again and again.



Zhao Mengjun surprises with new works on canvas and paper that focus on the ancient Chinese poet Li Bai (701 - 762), the Francois Villon of the Tang period. As for the great Li Bai (also Li T'ai Po), for Zhao Mengjun, who lives in Germany, art is a medium of human expression. Two new works stand out in particular, which immediately continue Li Bai's verses in the painterly and pictorial: *Das Wasser des Gelben Flusses kommt vom Himmel* (The water of the Yellow River comes from heaven). Calligraphy is combined here with the blue, white

and red waves at the source of the stream, which carries with it quantities of golden-yellow sand on the way to the mouth. A golden yellow that visitors can also discover in Milana Novčić's paintings and which inspired the gallery's special event with a reading of Li Bai's poems on the afternoon of December 10th.

GBB SPECIAL in Advent
Sunday, December 10, 2023, 3:00 p.m
Friedhelm Ptok, Jessica Tietsche,
Christian Bertram reading
LI BAI - POET OF THE TANG

Milana Novčić, born in 1978 in what was then Yugoslavia, studied fine arts with a major in painting at the Belgrade Art Academy. Novčić came to Germany for the first time in 1999 and studied initially at the Düsseldorf Art Academy with Markus Lüpertz, and from 2003 at the Berlin University of the Arts with Daniel Richter and Anselm Reyle. In 2007-2008 she was a master student with Prof. Claudia Schneider at the UdK Berlin. Milana Novčić lives and works in Berlin.

Rolf Behm, born in 1952, studied at the Karlsruhe Art Academy, among other things with Markus Lüpertz. In 1977/78 he received the DAAD scholarship in London and in 1984/85 the Villa Romana scholarship in Florence. In 2019, Behm was invited to work at the International Residency of Arts Further On Air in Long Island (U.S.). His works have been shown at home and abroad since the 1970s. He is also represented in numerous collections, such as the Würth Collection, Ernst & Young, Essen, the Kunsthalle Mannheim and many more. Rolf Behm lives and works in Berlin and Rio de Janeiro.

Zhao Mengjun, born in 1961 in Xixia in the Chinese province of Shandong, studied at the Shandong College of Arts until 1985, then at the Institute of Art and Design at Tsinghua University in Beijing until 1993. He worked as an art publisher and art director at the Shandong Media Group in Jinan for over 28 years and is now one of the most respected painters in the People's Republic of China. Works by Zhao Mengjun have been and are repeatedly shown in solo and group exhibitions of contemporary art, for example in the Chinese National Gallery in Beijing, in Seoul (South Korea), in Jinan and Shanghai. Zhao Mengjun has been living and working in Germany for six years, currently in Mannheim.

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and by appointment

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