

## PRESS RELEASE // CAROLINE PAGÈS GALLERY



Christian Hellmich, *Allüre*, 2015, oil on canvas, 64 x 50 cm

### **Christian Hellmich**

*Graceland*

**Opening Friday, March 20 at 10 pm**

March 20 – May 16, 2015

Caroline Pagès Gallery

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Open from 3 - 8 pm Tuesday through Saturday, and by appointment.

Christian Hellmich was born in 1977 in Düsseldorf, Germany. He lives and works in Berlin. In 2004 he graduated in Painting from the Folkwang University of the Arts, Essen, Germany.

Hellmich's work is an exercise in taxonomy rather than narrative. His work process is strongly related to Max Ernst's concept of "optical provocations": source materials that elicit a personal reaction from the painter.

Hellmich keeps a collection of "optical provocations", a large pictorial archive compiled with no other criteria but his own intuition. The archive mostly comprises photographs, images from discount store brochures, several pictures from the Internet and art historical sources.

His paintings begin as pure colour fields, but a gestural and rough abstract approach eventually leads to simple geometrical forms. At this point Hellmich selects the first representational elements from his pictorial archive. He then integrates these elements into his cosmos and works them over until he finds a balance between openness and closure, and abstract and figurative parameters.

Different paint qualities allow him to emphasize texture, form and geometry, with a rigorous investment in materiality. Paint is troweled, streaked, dripped, scumbled and otherwise given a suave, sensuously physical presence. This also allows him to exhibit the production of the painting itself.

Different perceptions of space are always present in his work, avoiding one unique and common perspective. Hellmich draws a parallel between the "shielding" provided by architectural spaces — inside versus outside — and the space between a painting and the person contemplating it.

**Christian Hellmich** (DE, born in 1977) lives and works in Berlin. He graduated in Art with an emphasis on Painting from the Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen in 2004. In 2014 he participated in a residency at the Bartels Foundation in Basel. In 2015 he was awarded a working grant by the German institution Stiftung Kunstfonds.

His solo exhibitions include Kunstverein Oerlinghausen, DE (2014); *We Do Wie Do*, Tanja Pol Gallery, Munich, DE (2013); *Nitty-Gritty*, Artothek, Köln, DE (2013); von der Heydt-Kunsthalle, Wuppertal, DE (2012); *Bodenfreiheit*, Minken & Palme, Berlin, DE (2010); *odds and ends* (with Martin Wöhr), The Shelter, Köln, DE (2010); *The Array/Transfer-Domino*, Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York, USA (2010); Schwind Gallery, Frankfurt, DE (2005); Frank and Schlag & Co. Gallery, Essen, DE (2003).

Christian Hellmich took part in many group exhibitions, among them *Für immer Frühling*, Stiftung Bartels Foundation, Basel, CH (2014); *On the Same Side of the Water*, Studio I, Bethanien, Berlin, DE (2014); *Drinnen Binnen Buiten Draussen*, Kers Gallery, Amsterdam, NL (2013); *The Future Lasts Forever*, Interalia ArtCompany, Seoul, KR (2013); *Unheimliches Heim*, Corridor/Gangurinn, Reykjavík, IS (2012); *Grahnert, Hellmich, Rochelmeyer*, Marion Scharmann Gallery, Köln, DE (2012); *Winter in America*, Tanja Pol Gallery, München, DE (2011); *out of office*, Kunstmuseum Bochum, DE (2011); *Fritto Misto, Works on Paper*, Tanja Pol Gallery, München, DE (2011); *Hellmich, Kretschmann, Neukamp, Persson*, Marion Scharmann Gallery, Köln, DE (2010); *Broken Vision*, Mannheimer Kunstverein, DE (2009); Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, DE (2009); *What kind of painting?*, Sprüth Magers Projekte, München, DE (2008); *New Century New Painting: Recent Acquisitions*, Martin Margulies, Collection, FL, USA (2008); *Size Matters*, Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, Peekskill, NY, USA (2007); *Fresh Paint*, Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York, USA (2005); Städtische Gallery, Museum Folkwang, Essen, DE (2004); *Hier und Jetzt*, Gustav-Lübke-Museum, Hamm, DE (2004) and Städtische Gallery, Museum Folkwang, Essen, DE (2002).

Hellmich's work can be found in the collections of the Von-der-Heydt Museum, Wuppertal, DE; the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, Peekskill, NY, USA; Martin Z. Margulies Collection, Miami, FL, USA.

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