

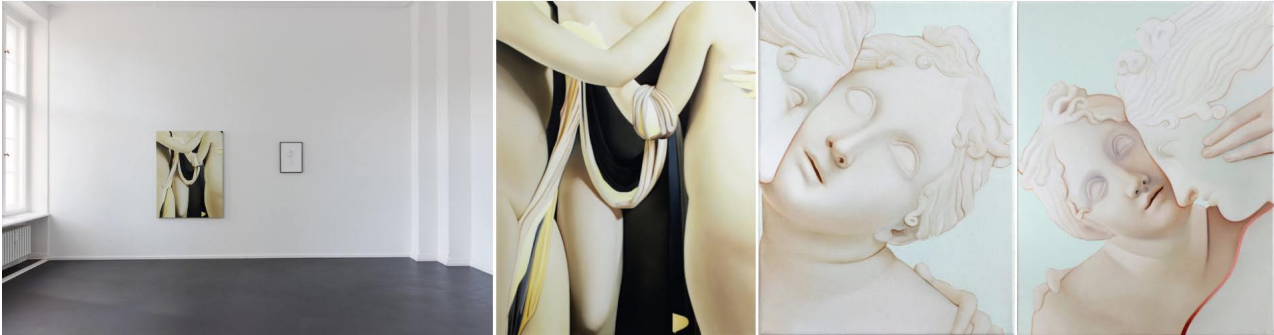
AUREL SCHEIBLER

Young Space, 24.05.2017
Kate Mothes: „Vivian Greven“
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online

Vivian Greven

IN PAINTING, SCULPTURE ON 24/05/17



These absolutely gorgeous paintings by Vivian Greven combine a respect for classical art and history with a contemporary sensibility, along with a desire to explore the emotional and expressive potential of the human face. Her subjects are at turns somber and erotic, and entirely gorgeous. More at the links after our wonderful interview!

First, can you introduce yourself? What first interested you in art, or in making it yourself?

Ever since I can remember, I really liked to draw. I enjoyed the tranquility that comes across while drawing and concentrating on this direct approach. So I think this was probably my first encounter with a form of art. Then, it must have been in secondary school, I first got to know the work of the impressionists. I really had a crush on Van Gogh. I even dreamed that I would meet him and talk about his paintings. There is an unbelievable intensity in his work – really like blazing fire. I felt extremely connected and in a way I knew there was no other option: I had to start to paint on my own. It was really like falling in love, you know, when you can't do anything about it even though it seems to be risky or stupid. It's magnetic.

Tell me a bit about your work! You make wonderful, small-scale paintings which are also accompanied occasionally by work in other media. Do you consider painting to be the focus of your practice?

That is a difficult question for me because I clearly have to say: yes, it is my focus! But, while saying so, I am neglecting the other pieces that accompany my paintings. That's unfair. Maybe I could say that I do not really know where the body of painting begins, nor where it ends. I am just doing what feels right to do and then maybe others can categorize it better than I can.

Often your pieces reference classical artworks, such as Bernini sculptures. Where do you find the inspiration for your pieces?

I think the inspiration is simply there. My responsibility as an artist is to keep myself open, sensible and responsive to welcome it. The internet is a fantastic medium to surf and drift through an endless amount of pictures and impressions.

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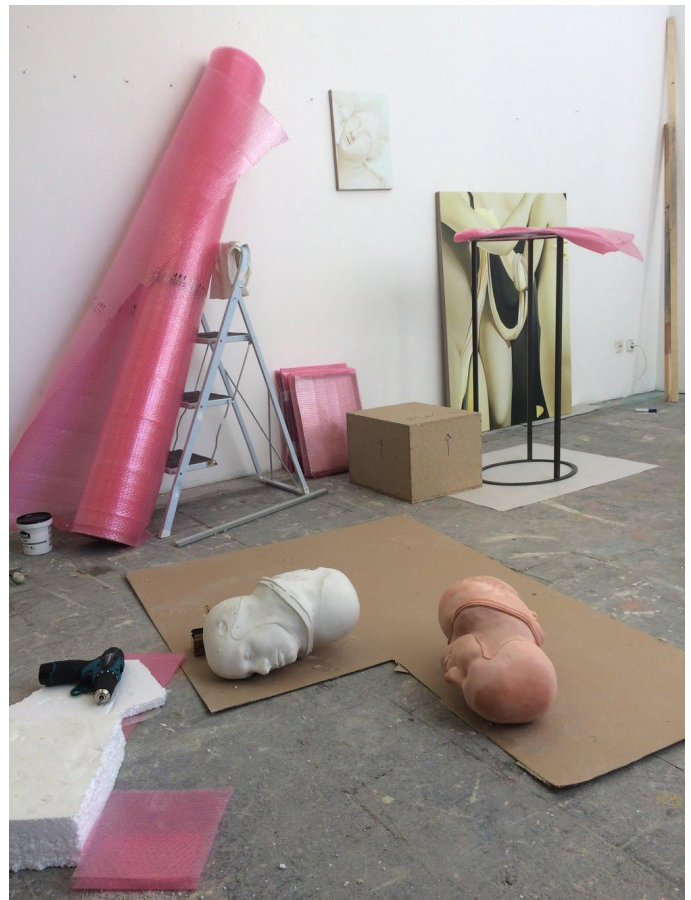
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What is the significance of the face, or more specifically human emotion, in your work?

I am really fascinated by the human face. I mean, honestly, have you ever thought about how abstract and weird it is? We have a nose, which makes us breathe and smell; a mouth, which makes us taste and talk; ears, which make us listen; skin, which makes us feel; and the craziest of all: eyes, which make us see and recognize the condition of the other's soul or spirit, or however you would name it. I think the face is the most important visible piece of a human being in order to get in contact with each other. And in the end this contact keeps everybody living. I mean babies can die when they are not looked at. This sounds unbelievable existentially – but that's the significance of the face.

What is your studio like currently?

I actually just moved into another space...so I am still moving in. But probably this is important to say so far: it is quite spacious. I have 10 meters in length and I absolutely enjoy to sit at the end of the room on my leather sofa and to absorb the atmosphere. It is really peaceful.



A U R E L S C H E I B L E R

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What is the best advice you have received so far? Is there any advice that you're glad you decided not to follow?

I always have kind of an intern struggle between my guts and my mind. I think the best advice for me was: "Go with your guts!"

During my education at the academy of arts Düsseldorf many people told me a lot of rules: "you are not allowed to do this or that...; when you want to be an artist, this is a No- Go..."etc. I think people are very frightened and they give you their anxiety (maybe even with the impulse to protect you). But fear is a pure blockade. I am trying to build bridges and not blockades.

What do you think is the most challenging part of pursuing an artistic practice, whether creatively or professionally?

Fear.

If you could call up any artist throughout the history of art, and ask them anything, who would it be, and what would you want to know?

Who: I cannot answer because there are too many. But by making art, I, anyway, sit together with all them on a big table – discussing, fighting, loving... at least, this is my idea. I would really like to know how you keep the fire burning.

What do you need most, or value most, as an artist?

I need sensitive and warmhearted contact. Often this comes from my friends. They take care of my daily dose. But, actually, it can come from everybody.

Another thing is humor.

What does "success" mean to you?

I would like to die happy, satisfied, recognized and loved.

What are you working on right now?

I just had the opening of my show GRAZIA at Aurel Scheibler, Berlin. So at this moment I am settling myself to find out what comes next. GRAZIA shows a group of work referring to Antonio Canova's sculptural depiction of the three graces as a starting point for my artistic exploration. Based on the digital images of the sculpture, I observe detailed fragments, which I enlarge and bring into focus. This practice means a double revision of the artwork: on the one hand, there is a mimetical shift from the three-dimensional original sculpture, over the digital reproduction, to the two-dimensional painting; on the other hand, there is the art-historical shift of phenomenological connotations throughout the centuries.

Anything else you would like to add?

The counterparts – digital vs. analogue – are not a random choice, for I analyse their socio-philosophical meaning beyond the sensory perception of these poles. I have the impression that we experience a sensuous loss. The digital face replaces the icon. Pornography replaces any eroticism. It is my inner concern to counteract this contemporary loss.

Find more at viviangreven.de and on Instagram @viviangreven!