

**WILHELM DRACH (\*1952)**

The exhibition's title makes it clear to every visitor that there must also be figures to be discovered in Wilhelm Drach's paintings, which are quickly revealed through the figurative background information. Space-filling and colorful, they take their place on the picture surface, sitting naked and self-confidently in front of us. However, without the exhibition title, many of the pictures could easily be mistaken for non-representational art, expressive-tachistic expressions of emotion without object (or in this case rather subject) reference. Only one hint clarifies that the figurative premonition that may arise when looking at them for a longer time is a fact. In the search for human traits, many pictorial elements gradually decode themselves as reduced body abbreviations: the characteristic shadow under the breast, the striking line of the upper or lower leg, the vagina abstracted to a line, the angled arms. Soon one can no longer help but see only the figure that one had not even noticed at first glance.

It is precisely this boundary walk between abstraction and figuration that fascinates Drach: *"In my work, I try to sound out or shift my own previous boundaries. In a way, my drive is my curiosity. How far can I take a figure (...) apart, rebuild it and it is still a figure (...)?"*.

Despite all his abstraction, Drach always remains a figurative painter: his first and most important point of reference is still the visually perceivable reality, which he breaks down into its individual parts and analyzes. Incidentally, the same applies to the colors: Drach is not a "fauve" who uses colors completely detached from the real conditions. On the contrary: skin shimmers in all imaginable colors on closer inspection - depending on the body part, incidence of light, and environment. Therefore, even the old masters built the flesh tones of the body from many different layers of color in order to reproduce this color spectrum as realistically as possible. Wilhelm Drach does exactly the same but transfers the painting technique into his own, contemporary visual language. Drach splits the skin color spectrum into his nuances and shades and leads the viewer through the almost infinite polychromy of the skin before the eyes. We are not only black or white but also all the facets in between.

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