

GAGOSIAN



Extended through September 11, 2021

ALBERT OEHLEN

Tramonto Spaventoso

June 10–July 24, 2021

Gagosian at Marciano Art Foundation, 4357 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles

Albert Oehlen, *never sleep again | at the steering wheel a man is a man | starter – turn me on*, 2019, charcoal and acrylic on canvas, in 3 parts, overall: 145 7/8 × 245 7/8 inches (370.4 × 624.3 cm) © Albert Oehlen. Photo: Jeff McLane

June 4, 2021

Gagosian is pleased to present Albert Oehlen's *Tramonto Spaventoso* (2019–20). This is the first time that Oehlen's provocative and personal response to the Rothko Chapel in Houston is being exhibited in its entirety; the first part was shown at the Serpentine Galleries, London, in 2019–20, the second at Gagosian Beverly Hills earlier this year. The paintings are installed in a custom-built octagonal structure in the Grand Theater Gallery of the Marciano Art Foundation, reflecting the layout of the original chapel.

Oehlen uses abstract, figurative, and collaged elements—often applying self-imposed strategic constraints—to disrupt the histories and conventions of modern painting. While championing self-consciously “bad” painting characterized by crude drawing and jarring coloration, he infuses

expressive gesture with Surrealist attitude, openly disparaging the quest for reliable form and stable meaning.

In the eight large-scale paintings that constitute the *Tramonto Spaventoso* project, Oehlen variously interprets and dramatically transforms John Graham's *Tramonto Spaventoso (Terrifying Sunset, 1940–49)*, a painting by the Russian-born American modernist that Oehlen discovered in the 1990s and has been fascinated with ever since.

In a startling act of creative homage, Oehlen interprets Graham's puzzle-like image in myriad ways across multiple compositions. Using acrylic, spray paint, charcoal, and patterned fabric on canvas, he reworks various motifs from the original, including a mermaid and a man sporting a monocle and a Daliesque moustache. Combining graphic brushstrokes, deliberate "painterly" drips, and textural obfuscations, he tests the limits of coherence and legibility, challenging the viewer with unexpected aesthetic and thematic shifts.

The work is illustrated in the catalogue recently published on the occasion of the Beverly Hills exhibition.

Albert Oehlen was born in 1954 in Krefeld, Germany, and currently lives and works in Switzerland. Collections include the Broad, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Art Institute of Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, FL; Cleveland Museum of Art; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museo Jumex, Mexico City; Tate, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany; and Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Exhibitions include Museo di Capodimonte, Naples, Italy (2009); *Réalité Abstraite*, Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris (2009); *Terpentin*, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany (2012); *Malerei*, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna (2013); 55th Biennale di Venezia (2013); *Die 5000 Finger von Dr. Ö*, Museum Wiesbaden, Germany (2014); *Home and Garden*, New Museum, New York (2015); *An Old Painting in Spirit*, Kunsthalle Zürich (2015); *Behind the Image*, Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain (2017); *Woods near Oehle*, Cleveland Museum of Art (2018); *TRANCE*, Aishti Foundation, Beirut (2018); *Cows by the Water*, Palazzo Grassi, Venice (2018–19); *Unfertig*, Lokremise Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland (2019); and Serpentine Galleries, London (2019–20).

#AlbertOehlen

Press

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