

André Hemer: Birch Maple Oak Post Rococo

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Thick impasto swirls of paint and billowing floral forms frame glimpses of a purple and pink sky, portals to another world. Birch Maple Oak Post Rococo, André Hemer's solo exhibition at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, Berlin presents a captivating new series of mixed-media and video works that explore the question of how to make a landscape of

the contemporary moment. Taking cues from art history, Hemer filters the decadent and illusory aesthetics of the rococo through a modern sensibility to create shifting, layered images that are as unsettling as they are seductive.

The New Zealand-born artist uses scanners and digital photography to capture three-dimensional objects (either found or created from paint) en plein air, recording the changes in light and atmospheric conditions of that particular day. For this series, Hemer has also used AI tools to further extend the images, growing flowers and replacing some shots of sky with generated aerial views to complicate notions of place or more broadly, reality. Not that Hemer aims at realism: he describes his works as 'amalgamations' rather than 'representations' in the sense that each composition contains multiple layers, processes, mediums and art-historical references.





F.l.t.r: *Birch Maple Oak Post Rococo #6*, 2023. Acrylic and pigment on canvas, 122.5 x 90 cm, 48 1/4 x 35 3/8 in; *Birch Maple Oak Post Rococo #9*, 2023. Acrylic and pigment on canvas, 41 x 30 cm, 16 1/8 x 11 3/4 in; *Birch Maple Oak Post Rococo #8*, 2023. Acrylic and pigment on canvas, 54.5 x 40 cm, 21 1/2 x 15 3/4 in

Echoes of velvet fabrics and elaborate ceiling frescoes

The influence of the rococo period can be seen in the luscious application of paint and rich, iridescent palette that brings to mind silk and velvet fabrics and elaborate ceiling frescoes, but the image that we might expect to appear never quite settles before the eye; instead, we are presented with a maelstrom of gestures that appear caught in a never-ending process of transference between form.

The effect is especially dizzying in the tondo paintings where the sculptural painted and two-dimensional digital forms draw the eye in towards the surface, framing a pocket of ethereal sky, while also threatening to consume it.

For Hemer, the act of destabilizing his compositions relates to the way in which we consume imagery. As he notes, the continual bombardment of visual material creates a complex and often mis-matched understanding of both history and the places that surround us. Alongside the paintings in the exhibition, he is also showing video works that further explore the melding of organic and inorganic materials.

Here, globules of paint spin in the sky to a soundtrack of birdsong and passing cars, recorded by the artist in situ. Once again, our concept of time and place is muddled, forcing us to concentrate less on what we are seeing and more on the bodily experience

– how the composition, textures and depths affect our perspective and physical orientation.



Working with his Allergies

Even the title of the exhibition is a mashup: birch, maple and oak are the species of tree that Hemer's hay fever app identified him as being most allergic to while 'post rococo' playfully invokes the idea of an evolved history. The irony, of course, is that in attempting to capture a landscape for contemporary times, a kind of no-place or everywhere, Hemer relies on traditional techniques (and being outdoors) as well as specific temporal conditions.



Birch Maple Oak Post Rococo #9, 2023

Acrylic and pigment on canvas, 41 x 30 cm, 16 1/8 x 11 3/4 in

The warm golden, red and peachy tones of this latest series are the result of both a particular light quality and environment. Nevertheless, the resultant works, in their shifting, shimmering hybridity, still manage to evade the trap – or is it deception? – of

representation. They are portraits if not of the present moment, then for it.

Birch Maple Oak Post Rococo

André Hemer

7 July – 15 August

Private View:

Thursday the 6th of July

6:30 – 8:30 pm

Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery

Linienstr. 130

10115 Berlin

Germany

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