

## THOMAS PIHL

27. 8. – 17. 9. 2015

Vernissage:

27. 8. 2015, 3 – 6 pm



Untitled, 2015, Inkjet on paper, 148 x 210 cm

The Wenger Gallery opens this season with Zurich's first exhibition of works by Thomas Pihl.

Seemingly monochrome at first sight, this Norwegian artist's paintings reveal on closer scrutiny an amazing wealth of colours. It takes time to assimilate the entire diversity, all the while with growing visual tension. Pihl's elaborate technique involves repeatedly pouring acrylic colour pigments on the canvas. Although there are no brush strokes that might indicate any particular viewpoint, his pictures seem more horizontally than vertically oriented. Often built up in ten layers or more, the pigments start oscillating on the surface and cause colour shifts that create pictorial depth.

Thomas Pihl strives for the perfect picture, but still leaves room for imperfections. Irregularities such as isolated paint bubbles or dots breaking through the hard smooth surface are deliberately retained. Pihl's works emanate an almost meditative effect. Our gaze slips away, turns inward, and the immediate surroundings are blanked out. Space and time seem to vanish. As if covered with a veil, the pictures remain diffuse and enigmatic. We are to some extent thrown back upon ourselves.

Thomas Pihl, born 1964 in Bergen, Norway, broke off his music studies to attend various art schools in Norway and the USA – from 1989 to 1996 the National College of Arts and Design in Oslo, from 1994 to 1995 the School of visual Arts in New York City, and from 1997 to 1999 the Hunter College of New York City University.

Since 1994 he lives and works alternately in New York and his hometown of Bergen. In 2011 Thomas Pihl took part in the Biennale Arte in Venice, where his pictures were exhibited at the Palazzo Bembo. He is a professor at Bergen academy of fine art, and his works are to be found in various collections including the Norwegian National Museum, Bergen Art Museum, the private collection of Queen Sonja of Norway, north Norway art gallery, and the Rogland Art Museum.

**Gallery cabinet:  
LARS STRANDH**



Untitled, 2015, acryl on canvas,  
40 x 40 cm

Lars Strandh, whose works are on show in the gallery cabinet, has a certain artistic kinship with Thomas Pihl. The two exhibitions are really complementary, which enables a broader and more differentiated overview. Strandh too expresses himself in a reduced, minimalistic language and focuses on the colour hues that he likewise builds up in layers, tone in tone, on the canvas. His technique and the effect of his pictures are very different, however. Instead of pouring, Strandh brushes his colours in several layers horizontally on the untreated canvas. But he also uses his brush bristles for opening up some of the lower levels again. This generates furrows and enlivens his works with horizontal lines indicating the artist's hand gestures. His paintings often suggest landscapes or seascapes, but he is concerned above all with the colours, and the experience of colours that appear very differently according to location and play of light.

Lars Strandh, born 1961 in Göteborg, Sweden, lives and works in Oslo, Norway. His works have featured in numerous individual and group exhibitions, and also figure in various collections.