

press announcement

**Andrea Bender, *Absent***

**Heiri Häfliger, *Odeur***

03.02. – 07.04.2018

In our new exhibitions we present new paintings by Andrea Bender and sculptures by Heiri Häfliger. You are invited to join us for the opening or to enjoy their shows anytime until the *finissage*.

**Andrea Benders** exhibition is comprised of works from the last three years. In her painting she merges the baroque and the contemporary. Putti are floating through the pictorial space in order to drive evil forces away. They are refreshing themselves in a feast of dionysian cherries, but somehow Andrea Bender has freed them from their childishness. Some kind of fairy is standing lost with a torn umbrella in between green tendrils, staring at us from eyes with dark rims. And even the sweetest sleep of a girl gives birth to those monsters, of whom Francisco de Goya knew already. While working on baroque and romantic topics Andrea Bender is neither trying to transfigure the past nor to blank out the now. Quite the opposite. Her way of painting is surprisingly contemporary in the double bind of claiming its authenticity and denying it at the same time: between hybris and scepticism, presumption and imposition, clear to cloudy – and of excellent painterly quality.

*Odeur* is the title of **Heiri Häfliger's** first show at gallery Michael Sturm. Considering the city of Vienna, where he lives and works, being attracted to the morbid one can easily fathom that his art won't smell of roses and violets. That appearances are deceiving is not of interest to Häfliger. He trusts in the uniqueness of the materials he works with and values „contingency over exact plans“, as he puts it. The abject, the ill-formed and the unruly allways form part of his objects. His works are mostly made of papermaché, sometimes not even hanging at the wall but standing on some kind of tray. At times Heiri Häfliger integrates common things as socks or scraps of foam in his sculptures. In this move the real size of the artist makes itself visible: with seemingly simple things Heiri Häfliger accomplishes to push the creative to its limits with great souverainity until our conventions and conditionings have fully vanished.

**Andrea Bender** (born 1972 in Schotten/ Germany) lives and works in Düsseldorf and Duisburg. She studied at the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main, at the School of Fine Arts Kassel as well as the Academy of Fine Arts Düsseldorf, graduating as a master-class student of Dieter Krieg. Scholarships have send her to Paris, Vienna and Venice. Since 1998 she took part in numerous solo and groupshows in Germany and beyond. The exhibition *absent* is her second solo-show at Galerie Michael Sturm.

**Heiri Häfliger** (born 1969 in Langnau/ Switzerland) lives and works in Vienna. From 1995-1999 he studied at the University for Applied Arts in Vienna being taught by Franz West. His graduation was followed by solo-projects and participations in exhibitions in Austria, Germany, France, England and Switzerland. *Odeur* is his first show at the gallery.

The opening of the two exhibitions takes place on Friday, 2nd of February from 7-9 PM.

For more information please visit [www.galerie-sturm.de](http://www.galerie-sturm.de).