

Heidi Hahn

A Woman With the Shapes

30.4.–5.6.2021

“I find with paint the description can be in the materiality, and all I have to do is distill the images into some overall experience. I have never called myself an artist; I am always and only a painter. It’s through that lens that I navigate in my life.”

(Heidi Hahn)



A Woman with the Shapes 1, 2021

Oil on canvas
193 × 160 cm

Heidi Hahn’s painting combines references to gestural abstraction with the figurativeness of expressive painting and reveals a unique view to current issues such as the relationship between identity, gender and society. Impressions of everyday situations and her personal surroundings trigger Hahn’s intuitive, dynamic painting process. Layer by layer, motifs of “body spaces” emerge. The borders between environment and body, surface and background are fluid. Hahn speaks of “narrative formalism”. In this sense, the intrinsic worldliness of painting is amalgamated with the intrinsic worldliness of the figures.

Heidi Hahn’s new works of the exhibition “A Woman With the Shapes” show an impressive focus on the nonverbal interstices of subjective and societal identity. The paintings all bear the same title, albeit with different numbers: “A Woman With the Shapes 1”, “A Woman With the Shapes 2”, “A Woman With the Shapes 3” and so forth. In conceptual terms, then, Heidi Hahn’s motifs depict an amalgamation of women. Each body appears in the shape of an abstracted typographic sign. The clothing alters its function, ranging from a protective cover, to an architectural housing, all the way to permeability or the disturbing hindrance of a new self-definition, as with “A Woman With the Shapes 1”. Hahn never starts with sketches, but instead develops her compositions in the process of painting. This method of “abstracting metamorphoses” draws the viewer’s gaze behind the surface of the painted illusion to a nonverbal expression of the most various constructions of identity and gender.

Biographical note:

Born in Los Angeles in 1982, Heidi Hahn currently lives and works in New York. Her works are part of renowned museum exhibitions such as the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, New Orleans Museum of Art, Kadist Foundation Paris, New Century Art Foundation Shanghai or Saastamoinen Foundation Art Collection, Helsinki. Heidi Hahn is an acting Professor for Drawing and Painting at the Alfred University in New York. Her paintings were presented at internationally renowned museum exhibitions such as at LSU Museums L.A, High Art Museums Atlanta, the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art or New Orleans Museum of Art.

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