

## Anselm Reyle

### HEAVY

JANUARY 28–FEBRUARY 20

OPENING FEBRUARY 28, 18:00



**Anselm Reyle**

*Untitled*

2021

Mixed media, neon, cable, acrylic glass

179 x 152 x 25 cm

Dirimart is pleased to present HEAVY, the solo show of Anselm Reyle in Istanbul. Heavy: that is indeed the right description for the works of the Berlin-based artist, also in a quite literal sense. The exhibition brings together the artist's large-format ceramics, abstract paintings on coarse burlap and the scrap metal work *Untitled* (2019), an accumulation of curled aluminium scraps like the waste from metal turning combined with neons to put on a brilliant show.

Junk and glamour, kitsch and high art, reference and statement, these dichotomies have always been closely related in Reyle's art. The artist uses such stylistic juxtapositions intentionally: there is nothing in Reyle's work that is not ambiguous. In an early interview, he had said that his works were about "their own questionability." This can be seen as a convincing image of his approach, which cultivates a certain ambivalence. This aspect manifests itself in his constant confrontation with the established limits of taste and aesthetic codes, in the opulence of his compositions and sheer presence of material. Yet this strategy should not make us overlook the intuitive and sensual aspects of Reyle's art, for they have strong effects on, for instance, the specific "overall coloration" of his stripe paintings, on his spatial use of neon lights or on the general composition of his paintings.

Reyle, in his recent works, seems to incline even more to the intuitive and the sensual, developing his characteristic formal vocabulary and working with found objects. Here his ceramics play a key role. His sculptures titled *Cryptal Darkness* (2020) or *Atop an Underworld* (2017), with their striking colours and encrusted surfaces, are inspired from flamboyant Fat Lava vases that appeared in the 1970s and ended up in flea markets as kitsch shortly after. Reyle takes this stylistic phenomenon as a motif, to experiment intensively with forms and glazes and develop a group of vase-like sculptures in large format. It was important to him to integrate chance more closely when working with the natural material clay—quite literally, you never know exactly what will come out of the oven. Random defects are often aesthetically interesting. Reyle is intentionally gestural; he spontaneously interferes in the process to allow some defects to happen, he even creates necessary conditions that would cause such defects: in this way, it is possible to open a space for aesthetical gesture and interpretation. For this end, Reyle gesturally maltreats the material before putting it into the oven, he adds scratches and cracks to the surface that often break open the closed form of the vessel. It is completed with the informal application of boiling lava paste and bright orange or cadmium yellow glazes or metallic monochrome surfaces. This is how Reyle creates style hybrids, which are rooted in both kitsch and traditional traits of contemporary art (think of Fontana, for example); he intuitively opens them up in his staging, while creating a certain ambivalence.



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In his material paintings like *Untitled* (2022), Reyle brings his form vocabulary together in a highly minimalistic way. Burlap, gesturally crumpled aluminium foil, urban found objects, neons placed in plexiglass boxes invoking museum displays: individually eye-catching elements assembled to form a whole. In these new paintings, the artist seeks to open up the very process of painting, like he does in his ceramics. In his series of new paintings, many of them painted on coarse burlap, the presence of materiality and free form plays a strong role again. These are informal, abstract compositions in which the painterly aspect is developed entirely from the gesture—albeit as a staging of gesture, almost the opposite of immediacy. As a matter of fact, this is another ambivalence that Reyle exploits in his compositions in a variety of ways. Those paintings are intense concentrations of contradicting dynamics; here Reyle plays out the dissonant colours and material canon that he developed in his stripe paintings, in a completely new way. The use of a rough material like burlap as a surface also fits in with this. The five to seven centimeter strong wood or aluminum bases of the paintings create a very haptic effect. The base is first covered with black linen, then the burlap is stretched so that the translucent darkness creates a special image space. In this way, Reyle sets a new tone, brings in depth and natural colours to the painting, to create a contrast between archaic atmospheres and the greatest possible artificiality. With this dynamic, he extends the playground of the painterly and paves the way to free composition.

The refined touch here is that all the pieces of his previously developed vocabulary—his signature gestures—can be found in these works while at the same time they are woven into a new complexity to gain new intensity and new visual effectiveness.

Text: Jens Asthoff

**Anselm Reyle** (b. Tübingen, 1970). He studied at the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Stuttgart and at the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Karlsruhe. He moved to Berlin in 1997 where he founded a studio in cooperation with John Bock, Dieter Detzner, Berta Fischer, and Michel Majerus. In 2009, he became a professor in Drawing/Painting at the Hochschule für bildende Künste in Hamburg. His solo exhibitions include Aranya Art Center in Qinhuangdao (2020), Galerie König Berlin (2017), Almine Rech Gallery Brussels (2017), Deichtorhallen Hamburg (2012), Des Moines Art Center (2011), Kunsthalle Tübingen (2009), the Modern Institute in Glasgow (2007), Kunsthaus Zürich (2006), among others. The artist is represented in collections such as The Saatchi Gallery, Daimler Collection, Fondation Pinault, Rubell Family Collection, to name few. He lives and works in Berlin.

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