

## AFTER THE STORM

Idris Khan & Annie Morris

9 June - 16 September 2023

Galerie Fabian Lang is pleased to announce the exhibition "After the storm", a fascinating encounter between artists Idris Khan and Annie Morris.

The connection between Idris Khan and Fabian Lang goes back 15 years when their paths first crossed in the art world at the Yvon Lambert Gallery in London. Fabian was deeply impressed by Idris' work, which is why he was drawn to the gallery at the time. As Idris Khan's artist liaison at the Victoria Miro Gallery, a close friendship developed between the two over the years. Annie Morris, Idris' wife, also became part of this special circle of friends over time.

The exhibition "After the storm" now symbolically closes the circle by presenting the works of Khan and Morris together in Fabian Lang's gallery space. The starting point of the exhibition is the famous painting "Snowstorm, Avalanche, and Thunderstorm" by William Turner. The colour palette of this painting analysed by Khan is taken up in his works, whereby the colour spectrum of Turner's painting is depicted in an abstracted form. Morris's sculptures also take their cue from this color spectrum which is reflected in her sculptures, spheres and tapestry.

In the context of the presentation of the exhibition, the visitor has the unique opportunity to enter a kind of large synthesis of an artwork. The gallery is transformed into a world in which Turner's painting is reproduced as if in a trompe-l'œil - in other words, an illusion of real representationalism with painterly means. Can the way we see a series of pixels strung together every day today imprint the image of a famous painting on our subconscious? Is it still appropriation or reproduction when what we see is only joined in thought to the original image?

"After the storm" is a tribute to the beauty of Turner's masterpiece, the symbolism and accompanying turbulence of our existence and life experiences, and at the same time perhaps a testament to the close relationship that has grown between Fabian Lang and the artists over the years.

Much has already been written about Morris' best-known work in the exhibition, the Stack series. These harmoniously but precariously balanced spheres of deep, saturated and hungry-making colours. As joyful, life-affirming and sumptuous as the works come across, the origin of the form has to do with processing loss - Morris' stillborn child. A symbiosis of grief and devotion manifests itself in the attraction one inevitably feels towards the emotionally charged hues and the sandy, rough surface of the spheres. Totemically - proud but fragile - the towers stand in the room. An attempt to make order out of the storm of what has happened.

Not far from it hangs an epochal-looking tapestry by Morris. Another aspect of her multifaceted practice are Morris' drawings of exalted strokes, gestures, surreal figures, flowers, trees, geometric grids and cryptic signs that she translates into yarn, almost automatically and unconsciously. The drawn line is reproduced with a sewing machine on unstretched linen. A process of slowing down sets in, turning her textiles into something more akin to painting. A richly populated stormy situation and a far-reaching imaginary landscape emerges, testifying to conflict, abandonment and phantasm.

From repetition, the perpetual revisiting of a creative gesture and its reworking, a processing abstraction inevitably sets in, offering a point of departure for something new. This is not only the root of Morris's way of working, but also that of Idris Khan. Whereas in Morris's work it is signs and drawings that serve to diarise, process and record, in Khan's work it is poems or prose texts. For him, too, they serve as source material or as building blocks for his condensed works. The lines of text become stamps, which he then uses to obsessively stamp the written repetitively onto gesso-primed blue aluminium panels, causing the meaning of the original text to disappear in favour of an abstract, universal visual language. It fades in favour of an essence that now crystallises out of the created image. Usually minimal in its appearance - here as a window into a world - and all the deeper the closer one approaches the work and tries to decipher it.

Khan often links the homage to his own story. He never hides the influence on his work. In his stamp and musical note works, one cannot help but think of Barnett Newman and his use of lines or abstract signs to enhance the intensity of the colours. In the downstairs gallery, there is a single bronze sculpture by Khan entitled 'Prelude - until time has dropped'. The scores are from Mozart's Requiem. Mozart died while composing it. It is thanks to his students who finished the work that we still hear it today. It is considered one of his most highly regarded and popular works. Idris' homage stands alone here in a room. But it can only be brought to sing together, like this exhibition. A salute to friendship.