

ARKEN

PRESS RELEASE

DAVID OSTROWSKI

The F Word

28 February – 14 June 2015

Brilliant mistakes

The beauty is in the mistakes. That is how the German artist David Ostrowski paints. He hurls himself headlong into an exploration of the boundaries of painting and the potential of cultivating emptiness, chance and any mistakes that may arise in the painting process. In a new exhibition at ARKEN he shows how a work about nothing is always a work about something – including beauty.

Despite his young age, the Cologne-based artist David Ostrowski (b. 1981) has already achieved great international success. The overwhelming interest is testimony that painting is extremely relevant in the digital age. His non-figurative, almost empty paintings have the aura of a special sensibility. And like the works, the artist behind them is at once enigmatic, self-ironic and teasing. One of his works is already part of the ARKEN collection, and from 28 February Ostrowski will be showing his very latest paintings in the exhibition *The F Word*.

From absolute zero

David Ostrowski lost almost all his early works when his studio burned down in 2009. This might have become the starting point for him to start from scratch and penetrate to the very core of painting – an absolute zero to which the title of the exhibition also refers. 'F' stands for flaw, freedom and the lowest grade (Failed) in the American school system – from there, things can only get better. Just as the title is a nod to our normal expectations of painting, to which Ostrowski literally gives the finger.

Painting with the right hand as if it were the left

You have to open your mind in the encounter with David Ostrowski's works, which appear provocatively empty – often as white surfaces interrupted only by stray, vague strokes of paint from a spray can. Glued-on scraps of paper, dirt on the canvas and the odd hair in the paint testify to a painting process that is just as important as the final result. For Ostrowski painting is an exercise in arousing the greatest possible emotions with the fewest possible resources. Driven by the element of surprise, he sabotages the classic virtues such as composition, style and the aspiration towards perfection by subjecting the canvas to errors, chance events and unmotivated actions. He himself calls his way of painting "painting with the right hand as if it were the left one". But what has the appearance of carelessness is profoundly serious and full of drama for David Ostrowski.

Painting is pushed to the limits and Ostrowski's intentional mistakes testify that we are far from finished with understanding the scope of painting.

Catalogue

The exhibition is accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue with essays by Jörg Heiser, co-editor of Frieze Magazine as well as Christian Gether, director of ARKEN. The price of the catalogue is DKK 99.

DAVID OSTROWSKI. The F Word can be seen at ARKEN in the period 28 February until 14 June 2015.

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