

# ***I'm Not There***

## ***The Invisible Influx of Music on Art***

19 January – 4 March 2023

**Max Frintrop**

**Isa Genzken**

**Filip Markiewicz**

**Radenko Milak**

**Thomas Scheibitz**

**Bettina Scholz**

**Emil Schult**

**Henning Strassburger**

**Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery is pleased to present a group exhibition curated by Max Dax.**

*I'm Not There – The Invisible Influx of Music on Art* is a conceptual exhibition about the relationship between the visible and the invisible. In its approach, the exhibition draws a lot from Harald Szeemann's groundbreaking *When Attitudes Become Form* exhibition at Kunsthalle Bern in 1969: to make the invisible (conceptual approach) visible via concrete works of art.

Music — in contrast to the visual arts — is an immediate, invisible, time-based medium. A melody can remain stuck in our heads forever — even if we have only heard it once. The painter Thomas Scheibitz asks: “How long do we really consider a work of art in life, unless it is in our direct environment? The decisive factor is the amount of time spent in front of a work of art, as well as the fact that we are actually in the presence of it. In that respect, for example, pictures can be very direct. The immediacy in music is different.”

The exhibition refers to two museum shows curated by Max Dax in 2019 at Deichtorhallen Hamburg (under its original title *Hyper!*) and in 2020 at Kunsthall Rotterdam (under the title *Black Album / White Cube*) — with less participating artists and within the premises of Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery on a far more focused and cohesive level. *I'm Not There – The Invisible Influx of Music on Art* tells a multi-faceted story of mutual inspiration that focuses on contemporary painting from Germany. This story can be pieced together like a puzzle of questions and answers from visual artists and musicians. To be interested in one another means to enter into a dialogue: A musician might be interested in the functioning of the art business and techniques of painting in order to incorporate the resulting insights into his compositions or music production. Or a painter may well ask why music dissemination through mass media such as records and radio seem more at ease, less academic, more accessible — even though

in both cases we are dealing with the arts, which relate to the world and the self, to love and the political.

### **About the artists and the exhibited works**

**Max Frintrop** (b.1982, Oberhausen, Germany) is a master student of the Albert Oehlen class at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf and one of the most celebrated young and upcoming painters in Germany. In the Oehlen class, students were encouraged to seek solutions to problems they encountered in painting by engaging with the other disciplines — most notably music. Max Frintrop's large-format ink and acrylic paintings are not only named after songs and singers that were the inspiration for the works, they also adapt the music in rhythm and gesture.

**Isa Genzken** (b.1948, Bad Oldesloh, Germany) has long been considered one of Germany's most important and influential contemporary artists. Since the 1970s, Genzken's diverse practice has encompassed sculpture, photography, objet trouvé installation, film, drawing and painting. Her work borrows from the aesthetics of music, punk culture, Minimalism and assemblage art. The four works of her series *New York, 1981* show musicians performing at the infamous CBGB's punk rock club in New York. By cropping the photographs, the featured musicians become literally *faceless* — what remains are their gestures: prototypical musical gestures.

**Filip Markiewicz** (b.1980, Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg) has experienced more than one perspective on the pop world. As a son of Polish emigrants, he was born in Luxembourg. In the former Soviet East, Western pop and capitalism were considered enemies of the political system, and at the same time a utopia dreamed of by many. In the West, however, Markiewicz experienced pop as an increasingly commercialized culture in which artists had to position themselves if they don't want to be conformists. In his drawings and oil paintings, the visual, but also the contextual influence of music is unmissable. Quotations from song lyrics as well as references to iconic self-stagings of pop stars can be found in his drawings, for example when he turns the line, *I'm just a copy of a copy of a copy...* by Trent Reznor (Nine Inch Nails) into a pictorial motif in his drawing of the same title.

**Radenko Milak** (b.1980, Travnik, Bosnia and Herzegovina) is a modern master of the watercolor painting. Ever since his breakthrough exhibition *365* at Kunsthalle Darmstadt in 2014 (the title refers to the 365 days of the year) he continued to paint comprehensive series of black-and-white watercolors that were dedicated to specific topics, such as the pandemic, female role models, and catastrophes. By invitation of the curator Max Dax, Radenko Milak started to paint in 2018 an extensive new series that was dedicated entirely to music-historical moments titled *Musical Transcendences*. Ever since, Radenko Milak is extending this series of music-

influenced motifs. The seven watercolors on show are mostly new paintings that Milak did specifically for the exhibition at Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery.

**Thomas Scheibitz** (b. 1968, Radeberg, GDR, now Germany) is one of the most important German painters and sculptors of his generation. Since the early 1990s, he has developed a specific new direction in conceptual painting and sculpture that draws equally upon art-historical as well as musical references, and at the heart of his work is a search for a new relationship between figuration and abstraction. His two sculptures *Nano Guitar* and *Peace* in their formal language both refer to the shape of the so-called *Flying-V* electric guitar that is predominantly used in heavy metal and hard rock music. Its shape was used by scientists of the Cornell University in Ithaca, USA, to illustrate how advanced nano technology had already become by the year 1997. With the help of a precise laser beam the scientists proved that the nano guitar could even be played. Thomas Scheibitz was fascinated by the fact that scientists used an example from the world of music to manifest their success in nano technology and adapted the narrative when he created his oversized Nano Guitar sculpture in 2011.

**Bettina Scholz** (b.1979, Neuruppin, GDR, now Germany) is an emerging new painter from Germany who works in a synesthetic manner that forms the basis of her large-scale, stela-shaped, alchemistic paint splashings: she sees colors in her head when listening to the techno music of Helena Hauff, the experimental big band jazz of the Sun Ra Arkestra, or Hans Zimmer's and Benjamin Wallfisch's elegiac *Blade Runner 2049* score — and translates these synesthetic experiences into paintings. These works of art wouldn't exist without the influx of music that triggered the shape and abstract forms in the paintings. Scholz is ever extending her ongoing series with stela paintings influenced by the music of Underground Resistance, Jerry Goldsmith, Queen, Kenji Kawai, and many others.

**Emil Schult** (b. 1946, Dessau, GDR, now Germany) is internationally considered one of the most iconic German painters of the 20th century. As a student of Gerhard Richter, Joseph Beuys, and Dieter Roth, he became world-famous for being the official painter for the Düsseldorf-based pop group Kraftwerk that used many of Emil Schult's paintings as their album and poster artworks. Vice versa, Kraftwerk's reputation for being equally influential as The Beatles or David Bowie was heavily informed by the fact that the group heavily allowed the influx of visual arts on their music (and their stage performances).

**Henning Strassburger** (b.1983, Meissen, GDR, now Germany) is looking back at numerous high-profile solo exhibitions in museums and galleries all over Europe. In his work he explores the role of painting as a filter of the aesthetics of mass culture and specifically of music. As a painter, he developed a highly differentiated vocabulary of recurring forms and gestures that allow him to continuously orient himself in ever

new series of paintings to a long since balanced painterly grammar. Henning Strassburger's two new paintings refer to the culture of Surf Rock in California — waves, palm trees and sun are rhythmically arranged in them like hieroglyphics.

**Max Dax** (b.1969, Kiel, Germany) is a curator, writer and journalist who explores the tension between art, music and pop culture. He was the publisher of Germany's first interview magazine, *Alert*, as well as the editor-in-chief of the country's most influential magazine for pop culture, *Spex*, and the English-language European magazine *Electronic Beats*, before he founded the Santa Lucia Galerie der Gespräche (*Gallery of Conversations*) in 2015 in Berlin. Max Dax did curate the museum exhibitions *Hyper! A Journey into Art and Music* at Deichtorhallen Hamburg in 2019 and *Black Album / White Cube* at Kunsthal Rotterdam in 2020. He is the author / publisher of numerous art catalogues, artist books and oral histories.