

Art now ! (Theory later) – About the current collection of Carbon12, Dubai

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If you take a walk through the gallery Carbon 12 in Dubai or have a quick look at their website, you might wonder, "This gallery opened a few months ago, and there is no naked guy covered with white powder? No chicken nuggets turned back in to chicken? No formaldehyde whatever?" Well, maybe you spent too much time on the web or reading magazines looking for the next hyper-sensation, the next 15-minutes-of-fame attempt.

Take a closer look. Forget the multimedia soaked screaming-for-attention exhibition, the gossip of who did what and when with who. Take a look at what really matters. Take a look at the artworks themselves. Take a look at the colours, the compositions and the impressions they leave. An old definition says, "Painting is a mode of capturing, documenting and expressing the varied creative intents, as numerous as there are practitioners of the craft." The "practitioners of the craft" presented at Carbon 12 take their art seriously, and their "creative intents" are on point. Not being indifferent to difference, but to define the difference, to make the difference. Precision and Expression. Passion and Power. Those are the keywords that come to mind, when the artworks' impact hits you.

The Difference is what makes the current collection of Carbon 12 special: Not focusing on a single style, a single geographic region, or genre, but presenting the cream of the crop of all types. Be it neo-baroque or hyperrealistic, nostalgic or poetic, naturalistic or psychotropic.

The German philosopher Wolfgang Iser found the roots of postmodern philosophy in the theory of modern art. Looking at the artwork at Carbon 12, with outstanding young talents like Alessa Esteban or Bernhard Buhmann and established artists like Markus Oehlen or Tor-Magnus Lundeby a new paradigm seems to evolve: The cultural turn and the narration of culture itself seem the basis for this new form of art. A new chapter of art history is written: personal and universal at the same time, touching and distant, vibrant and calm. This juxtaposition requires a complex mode of reception: The artist, the viewer and the work are intertwined in a process like Iser's concept of "aesthetic thinking". The aesthetic and anaesthetic parts of perception create a sensual experience beyond the classical so-called art experience. At the same time the artworks go beyond by neglecting a certain oh-so sophisticated theoretical foundation: The presence of the

artist is strong, the viewer is absorbed, this dialectic is omnipresent. Theory doesn't seem to catch up by now, but only time will tell.

Until then, it's for us, the art lovers to enjoy: the comeback of colour, the comeback of virtuosity, the comeback of the artist as the author: Art now, Theory later.