

# Metamorphosis etamorphosis tamorphosis morphosis orphosis rphosis hosis osis sis s

Willi Bucher  
15.12.24–12.01.25

- 1 Willi Bucher, untitled, oil on canvas, 2001
- 2 Willi Bucher, Franz, oil and print on canvas, 2007

Willi Bucher (\*1948 in Bühl near Günzburg) has been working as a painter and video artist since 1980. Color and canvas play just as important a role as digital controlled technology, which he discovered for himself at the age of 50 and has since developed a variety of space- and time-related works. „His non-representational painting is in the tradition of Art Informel. Bucher works with the effects of paint, with its material properties, allowing it to run thinner or firmer or to condense into a crust, to become a relief. Such a surface, located in the physical space of the viewer, plays with immediate tactility, even if only mediated through the eyes, as paintings are generally not allowed to be touched.“<sup>1</sup> He looks back on numerous exhibitions in Germany and abroad including New York, Washington or Shanghai.

<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Seyfarth in: Willi Bucher, Malerei mit eigenen und anderen Mitteln, Wienand-Verlag Köln, 2014

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»Yes.«  
»No.«

These are the first and last words that Gregor Samsa says in Kafka's »The Metamorphosis.« Hope has left him. For the last show of the year two yellow paintings by Willi Bucher are exhibited on the first floor of Fürstenwall 74. One shows a portrait of the Austrian-Czech writer Franz Kafka, who died 100 years ago. At first, both works seem like rays of hope and sources of light. In the empty and darkened room, you are almost immersed in the color. The visitor is silently invited to detach from everyday life in order to enter into a dialog – thus turning the paintings into a tool of communication.

Willi Bucher is a painter. Even though many other means of expression play an important role in his work (especially light and projection), color and canvas carry his world of thought to the outside world, making it visible. The exhibition invites viewers to go on journey through the world of the color yellow; less a decorative walk, but rather a short performance of color theses, conceptual painting or the sensual application of paint. Our prerequisite for this color vision is based on the entire spectrum of light. A yellow screen is not yellow, but only appears so because it reflects the yellow components of the light, while absorbing other color ranges. A closer look at the painting reveals its primed jute fabric and offset letters in yellow and black. When read together, they form the name »Franz« in an endless loop. From a certain distance, the portrait of Kafka can be recognized, whose gaze seems to be directed more inwards towards his own observation than towards the viewer. Cogito ergo sum (I think, therefore I am) It is this introspective view in particular that gives rise to the idea of experiencing the relationship between ourselves and the space that surrounds us by means of painting and thus deciding for or against an action or attitude as a thinking person – or simply to observe.

In the second work »Untitled« dozens of layers of paint conceal the background. Only a strip of tape removed by the artist after ending the painting process provides a glimpse, expanding the surface into its sculptural third-dimension. Again and again Bucher sat down in front of the canvas to paint the same picture, consisting of a single layer of yellow paint. It is this presence of time that once again brings to mind a work by Kafka. In the posthumously published novel »The Trial«, a painter paints the eternally same picture in the eternally same space, but never at the same time. The different versions document even the smallest deviation. In Bucher's work, it is the brush hairs, the fine dust in the studio or clumping particles of paint that visibly preserve the deviations in each layer of paint for the viewer. Especially at the end of the year, we find ourselves in a state of transition. Honoring Kafka's work and reflecting on it from the perspective of Willi Bucher's art at the end of the writers 100th anniversary reminds us of the familiar, incomprehensible in-between world in which the old no longer exists, but the new has not yet been born.

(Aileen Treusch)