

ANDY DENZLER

INTROSPECTION

OPERA GALLERY

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Cori Hutchinson

Swiss artist Andy Denzler offers a smattering of familiar technique and fatigued form in newfangled oil works. These eleven paintings spread laterally across the canvas in his beloved style, render solitary, focal figures in moments interrupted only by horizontal, smearing brushstrokes. The edgelessness of the forms transports the bodies, garments, and furniture to a plane both aloof and haunted, neither here nor there. Denzler's work directly responds to the coy effect of photorealism, instead invoking Jean Baudrillard's notion of "paradise" on earth/in real-time: "Against this artificial paradise of technicity and virtuality, against the attempt to build a world completely positive, rational, and true, we must save traces of the illusory world's definitive opacity and mystery" (1). Denzler saves traces à la Baudrillard by way of his process: composition to the end of decomposition. First, the scene is wrought, then using wet-on-wet, challenged.

His models feel both identifiable and anonymous, faceless and opaque, yet distinguishable. If his scenes were once "frozen" in time, they are now glacially melting before the viewer on the horizon as a block of butter in a simple pan. The eye is drawn to this movement. And it is not just the body that is active, but the hair, leather, soul too, commingling in the paint color and texture. All elements are interspersed and kinetic.

In this new set, the female figures are often seen lounging between milky walls and sheer fabric. This is the case with "Girl on a Brown Leather Sofa II," "The Examination," "Tattooed Girl on a Bed," and "Woman With Glass Bowl." In each, there is an ambivalence in the woman's expression and posture, as if indifferent to the gaze of the artist, falling somewhere between classical portraiture and contemporary fashion photography. In this selection, the horizontal line "glitch" resembles almost an asemic text, as legible as the folds of linen or the sheen on an oak headboard. Each figure is particularized by a subtle, gestural detail, respectively: a wide, lacy sleeve, a tattoo, a chin blemish, a glass bowl.

The male figures in "Introspection I," "Self portrait in Black," and "Daydreamer" are all upright. The first two hover against a charcoal backdrop, looking down. "Introspection" wears a somber and formal coloring. His dark gray coat is only differentiated from the backdrop by a not-quite-halo lining of white. The figure's hands are holding each other and a glimmer of a bracelet or watch is rendered by a quick, diagonal brushstroke.

In "Selfportrait," the figure stares down at his open palms, echoing if not extrematizing Belgian artist Michael Borremans's strange and wonderful composition in "Man Looking Down at His Hand" (2007). The pose is reminiscent of that quintessential early scene in all superhero films during which the hero is momentarily mystified by his own power, often emanating from the mortal paw. In interviews, Denzler will, unprompted, express an affinity for cave paintings, which he believes will define the first and last illustrations of the human artist class. The Spartan backdrop of both paintings recalls that belief as the figures barely illuminate their cavernous surroundings.

"Daydreamer," on the other hand, sits on a slick desk, ankles exposed, looking up ecstatically (or drowsily) toward a luminous window, basking in the glow. It appears as if there are a pair of phantom legs dangling to the right of his own; the figure is parodied by a distant watertower.

"Introspection III," a triptych, represents a woman in three active poses wearing some of the best renderings of tattered denim shorts I've seen. The neutral, fleshy palette is accented by flashes of orange around the figure,

as if demonstrating the fiery and musical heat of motion. Denzler nods to the triptychs of Francis Bacon here.

Of these new paintings, my favorite is the precious outlier "Leni Sleeping on a Pillow." It reminds me immediately of Lucian Freud's "Still-life with Book" (1991-2) in which a pillow is used as a bookmark or paperweight in order for the two pages on display in the painting to lie flat. The folded black creature—dog? possum? "Leni"—here is providing that same weight to this composition. The paint has cracked at the bottom in large blocks, a dash of turquoise provides sheen to the animal's coat and cheeks, its backend is smeared off the canvas as if the soul and body were pulling apart in dreams. The scene is both gothic and adorable, mundane yet ferociously symbolic in the vein of Blake. An intense speed is communicated by the way the shadow background in the first quadrant is darting horizontally and then stilled by the presence of the furry animal. The pillow, although extremely flat, resembles a cushy island of comfort and respite. The lines within the smearing resemble drool.

The horizontal smear that is a staple of Andy Denzler's work does not render his models plummeting hell-bound nor in spiritual ascension. They feel planted, firmly earthly, harkening other panoramic motions such as the metaphor of a book (page-flipping), reeling through ancient microform, rock formations, layered cake, the cyclical spin of laundry, thread on a rugged loom. This panning resists a digital (vertical) scroll. Moreover, capturing a contemporary malaise through a vintage lens corrupts the image. Denzler aptly expresses this distance between perception and reality, as in the poem "The Man With the Blue Guitar" by Wallace Stevens, which gestures to Picasso, acknowledging the limitations of art to articulate the "real:"

And things are as I think they are

And say they are on the blue guitar (2).

It is really a theater of painting, rather than a single photographic scene that is captured by these individual works. The final painting, "Leni Sleeping on a Pillow" is no paradise of technicity, to resuscitate Baudrillard. In fact, it thrashes against that vision simply by way of the subject being at its most docile, as if told to "act natural," then napped.

It is ever-affirming to see an artist hone in on what is surely a gripping practice, especially one that is so difficult to net with the temperamental device that is modern language. In these very fresh (almost still-wet) works, Denzler masters technical proficiency and sapient tension between a pop art process and a palette that is both fleshy and industrial. However, it appears he is leaning into a more romantic affliction this year, channeling a contemplative weariness of spirit and physical form.

Notes:

1. "The Murder of the Real." *The Vital Illusion*, by Jean Baudrillard and Julia Witwer, Columbia University Press, 2001, p. 74. 2. Stevens, Wallace. "The Man with the Blue Guitar by Wallace Stevens." Poetry Foundation, Poetry Foundation, www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse?contentId=21658.





Reclining Figure With Chair, 2019

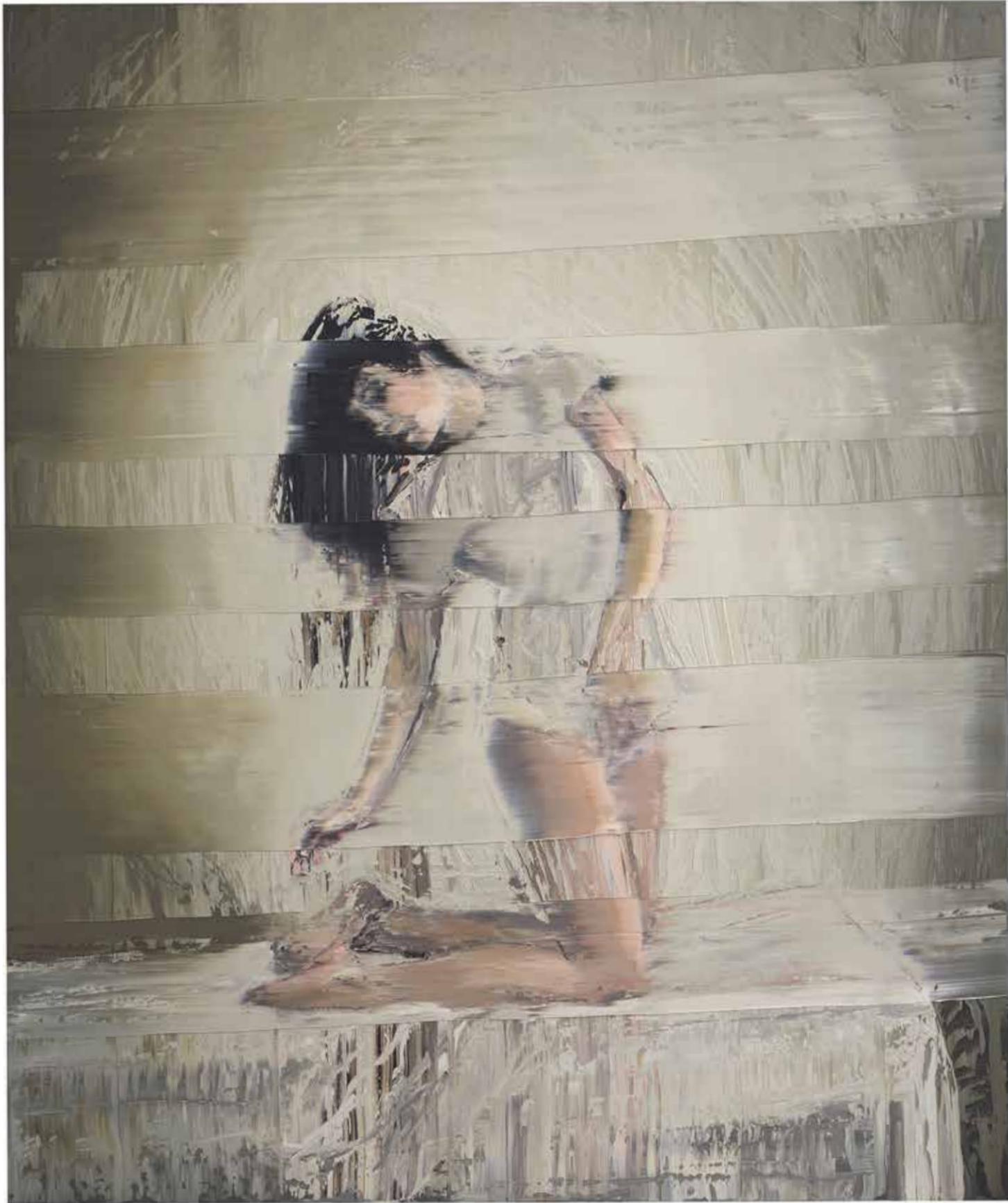
Oil on canvas
70.9 x 59.1 in | 180 x 150 cm



Girl on a Brown Leather Sofa II, 2019

Oil on canvas
55.1 x 47.2 in | 140 x 120 cm



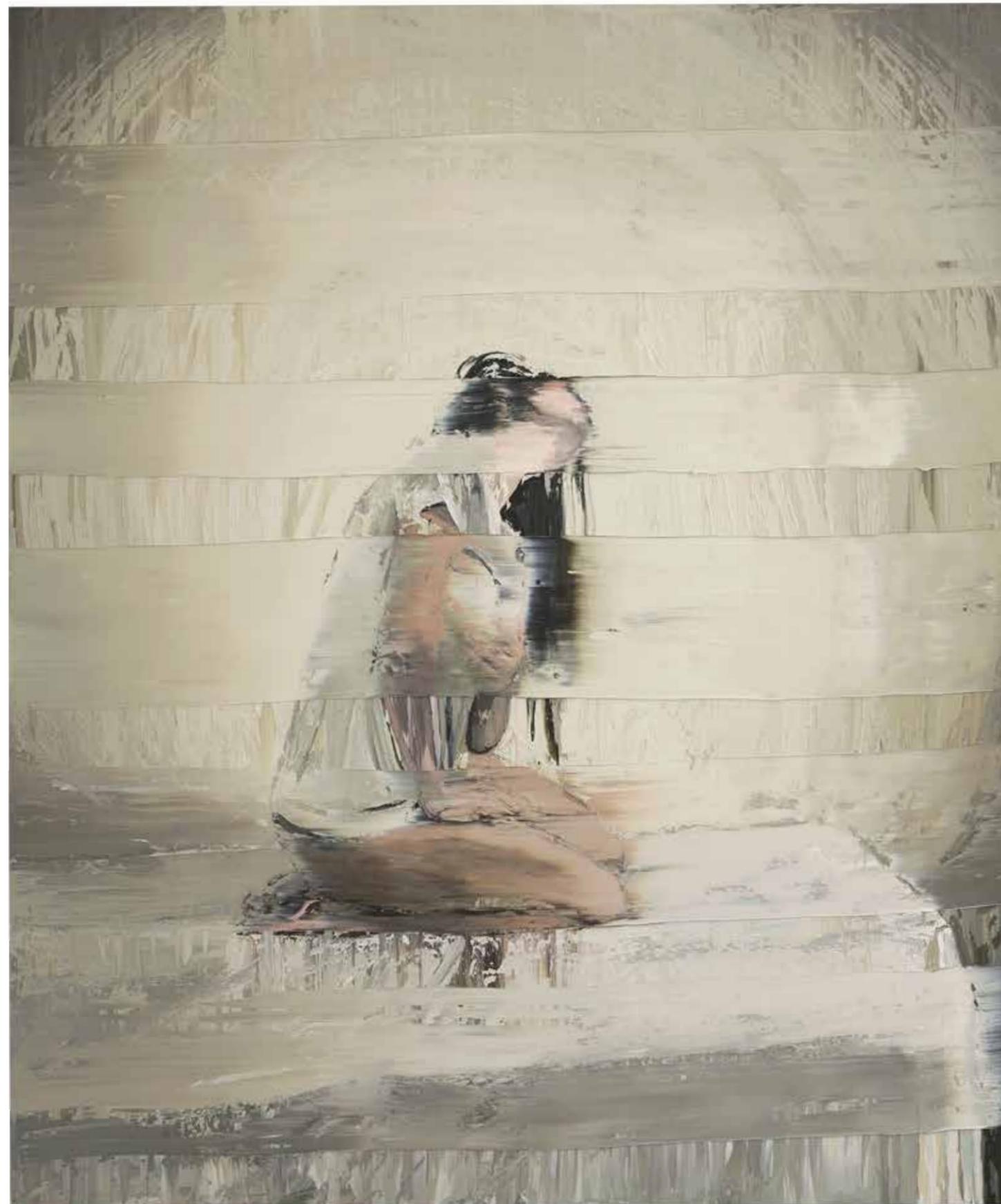


PREVIOUS AND FOLLOWING PAGES

Golden Cream Room II, 2018

Oil on canvas

Triptych 70.9 x 177.2 in | 180 x 450 cm





Golden Cream Room III, 2019

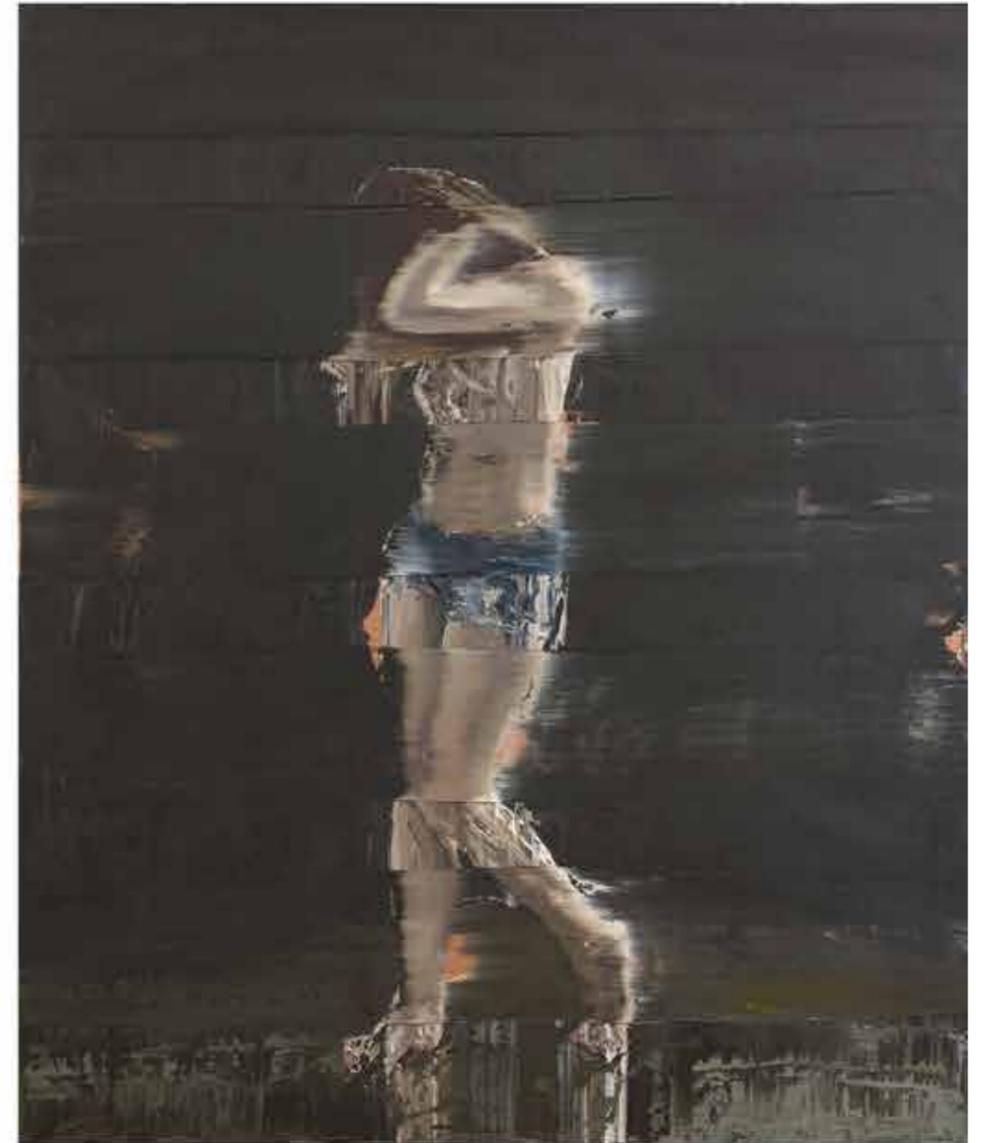
Oil on canvas
59.1 x 70.9 in | 150 x 180 cm



Introspection III, 2019

Oil on canvas

Triptych 70.9 x 177.2 in | 180 x 450 cm



Selfportrait in Black, 2019

Oil on canvas

82.7 x 70.9 in | 210 x 180 cm



The Myth, 2019
Oil on canvas
55.1 x 47.2 in | 140 x 120 cm



Leni Sleeping on a Pillow, 2019

Oil on canvas
27.6 x 31.5 in | 70 x 80 cm

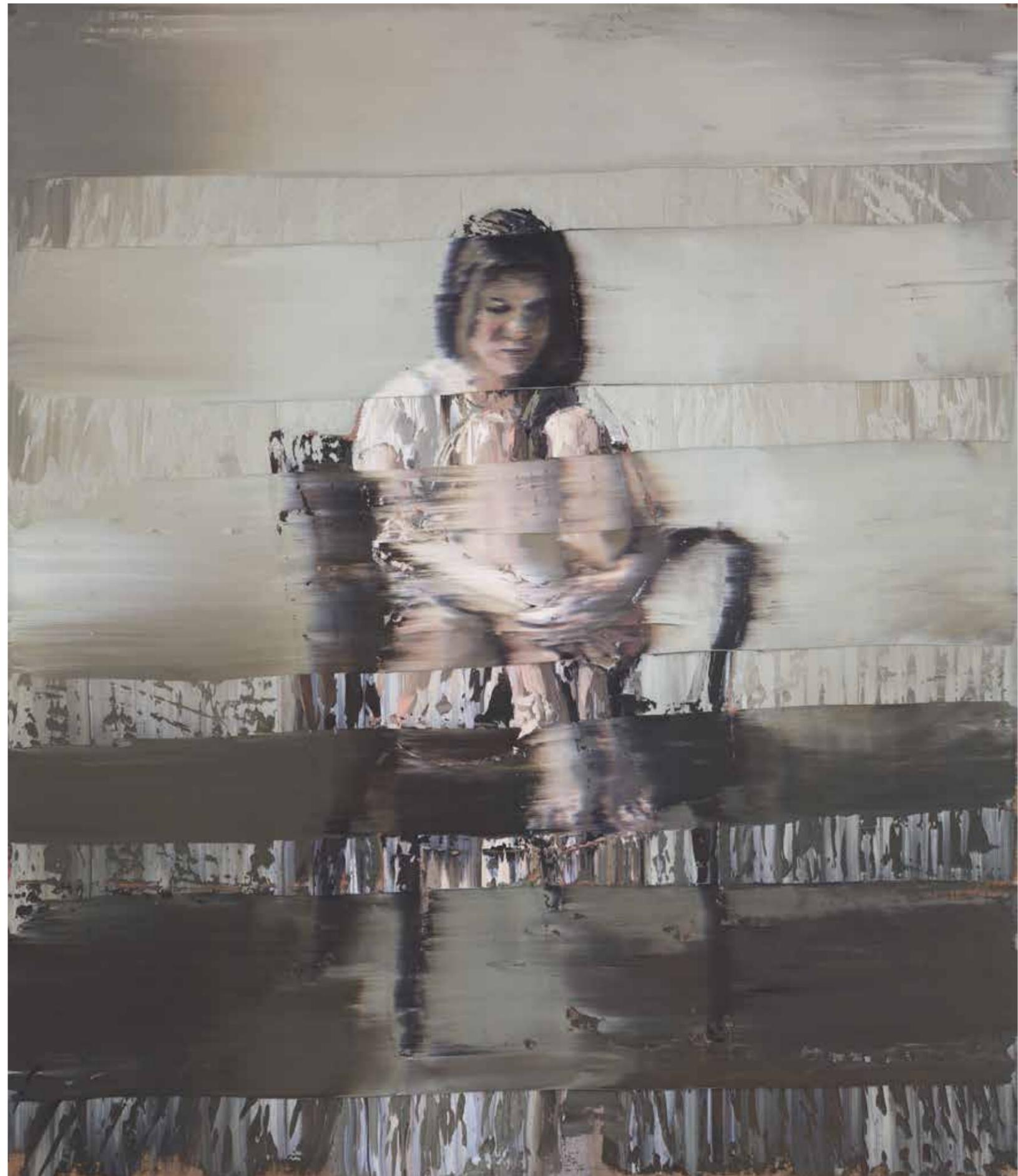


The Promise, 2019
Oil on canvas
47.2 x 55.1 in | 120 x 140 cm



Shifting Sense of Place, 2019

Oil on canvas
55.1 x 47.2 in | 140 x 120 cm



Introspection II, 2019
Oil on canvas
70.9 x 59.1 in | 180 x 150 cm



Sheer and Grey I, 2019
Oil on canvas
47.2 x 55.1 in | 120 x 140 cm





Sheer and Grey II, 2019

Oil on canvas
47.2 x 55.1 in | 120 x 140 cm

Sheer and Grey III, 2019
Oil on canvas
47.2 x 55.1 in | 120 x 140 cm



Introspection I, 2019
Oil on canvas
82.7 x 70.9 in | 210 x 180 cm



Leaving Downtown, 2019

Oil on canvas
47.2 x 55.1 in | 120 x 140 cm



The Examination, 2019
Oil on canvas
27.6 x 31.5 in | 70 x 80 cm



Tattooed Girl on a Bed, 2019

Oil on canvas
27.6 x 31.5 in | 70 x 80 cm



Under the Bronze Chandelier, 2019

Oil on canvas
27.6 x 31.5 in | 70 x 80 cm



Woman With Glass Bowl, 2019
Oil on canvas
47.2 x 55.1 in | 120 x 140 cm



Daydreamer, 2019
Oil on canvas
70.9 x 59.1 in | 180 x 150 cm





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OPERA GALLERY







B I O G R A P H Y

1965 Born in Zurich
Lives and works in Zurich

E D U C A T I O N

2006 Master of Fine Arts, Chelsea College of Art and Design, London
2000 Art Center of Design, Pasadena
1999 F&F Schule für Gestaltung, Zurich
University of California, Los Angeles
1981 Kunstgewerbeschule, Zurich

G R A N T S / A W A R D S

2014 International Artist Residency, Art Factory, Budapest
1997 Ernst Göhner Stiftung, Zug
1996 Cassinelli-Vogel-Stiftung, Zurich
Erziehungsdirektion des Kantons, Zurich

B I E N N A L E S

2016 Not New Now, Marrakech Biennale 6, Marrakech
2015 Memory and Dream, 6th Beijing International Art Biennale, Beijing

S E L E C T E D S O L O E X H I B I T I O N S

2018 Human Perspectives, Opera Gallery, Zurich, December
The Dark Corner of the Human Mind, Kunstforum Wien, Vienna
The Painter's Room, Opera Gallery, Paris
2017 Fragmented Identity, Opera Gallery, Monaco
Fragmented Figures, Schultz Contemporary, Berlin
2016 Random Noise, Fabian & Claude Walter Galerie, Zurich
Suspended Reality, Opera Gallery, New York
Between Here and There, Opera Gallery, London
2015 Breakfast with Velázquez, Michael Schultz Gallery, Berlin
Just Another Day in Paradise, Brotkunsthalle, Vienna
Sequences, Opera Gallery, Geneva
Figures & Interiors, Ludwig Galerie Schloss Oberhausen, Oberhausen
2014 Distorted Moments, Ludwig Museum, Koblenz
The Forgotten Palace, Budapest Art Factory, Budapest
Under My Skin, Fabian & Claude Walter Galerie, Zurich
Between the Fragments, Claire Oliver Gallery, New York
2013 Disolution & Resolution, Kunstraum Osper, Cologne
Empire Inc., Kunsthalle Rostock, Rostock

2012 Interior/Exterior, Michael Schultz Gallery, Berlin
 The Sounds of Silence and Distortion, Claire Oliver Gallery, New York
 Shifting Landscapes, Kunsthalle Dresden, Dresden
 Disturbia, Michael Schultz Gallery, Seoul
 Developing Landscapes, Gwangju Museum of Art, Gwangju

2011 Dissonance & Contemplation, Claire Oliver Gallery, New York
 Freeze Frame, Michael Schultz Gallery, Seoul
 Interiors, Fabian & Claude Walter Galerie, Zurich

2010 The Human Nature Project, Schultz Contemporary, Berlin
 Distorted Fragments, Art + Art Gallery, Moscow

2008 Shortcuts, Fabian & Claude Walter Galerie, Zurich
 A Day at the Shore, Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Los Angeles
 Insomnia, Galeria Filomena Soares, Lisbon

2006 Fusion Paintings, Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Los Angeles
 Moon Safari, Chelsea College, University of the Arts, London

2005 American Paintings, Kashya Hildebrand, New York

2004 Blur Motion Abstracts, Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Los Angeles

2002 White Paintings, Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Los Angeles

S E L E C T E D G R O U P E X H I B I T I O N S

2018 Abstracting the Real, Opera Gallery, Geneva
 Masters Unveiled, Opera Gallery, Zurich
 Painted Images, Sanatorium, Istanbul
 The Monaco Masters Show, Opera Gallery, Monaco
 Portrait, Opera Gallery, New York

2017 Painting, Leahn Gallery, Daegu
 Autumn Leaves, Michael Schultz Gallery, Berlin
 Transit, Michael Schultz Gallery, Berlin
 The Monaco Masters Show, Opera Gallery, Monaco

2016 Creative Frenzy, Schultz Contemporary, Berlin
 Monochromaniac, Opera Gallery, New York
 Thirty Year Anniversary, Fabian & Claude Walter Galerie, Zurich
 Addicted to Painting, Michael Schultz Gallery, Berlin
 Something, Berry Campbell, New York

2015 Imago Mundi, Luciano Benetton Collection,
 Fondazione Giorgi Cini, Venice
 Dancer in the Dark, Schultz Contemporary, Berlin

2014 Wunderkammer, Fabian & Claude Walter Galerie, Zurich
 The Weekly Show, Schultz Contemporary, Berlin
 In|Outsource, Amnua Museum, Nanjing
 Wild Heart: Art Exhibition of German Neo Expressionism Since the 1960s,
 China Art Museum, Shanghai

2013 Obscure, Fabian & Claude Walter Galerie, Villa Renata, Basel
 Salondergegenwart, Hamburg
 Bosphorus Brake, BAP Galleri, Istanbul
 O.T., World Art Museum, Beijing

Infinity - Neoexpressionism / Contemporary Art, Zhan Zhou
 International Cultural and Creative Industry Park, Beijing

2012 Beyond Bling, Claire Oliver Gallery, New York
 Abgrund und Pathos, Schultz Contemporary, Berlin
 Beyond the Paramount, Galerie Michael Janssen, Berlin

2011 10-20-10, Claire Oliver Gallery, New York
 Surface, Claire Oliver Gallery, New York

2010 Silly Gooses Live in The Dark, UF6 Projects, Berlin
 The Big World, Fabian & Claude Walter Galerie, Zurich

2009 Nursery Rhymes, Flowers East, London
 The Beautiful Painting Show, Fabian & Claude Walter Galerie, Zurich
 The Lure and The Seducer, Christoffer Egelund Gallery, Copenhagen
 White Show, Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Los Angeles

2008 Future50, PSL Project Space, Leeds
 Kapellmeister Pulls A Doozy, Seven Seven, London
 Unnatural Habitats, Flowers East, London

2007 Kindheit, Museum Rohnerhaus, Lauterach
 Anticipation, One One One, Flora Fairbairn Projects, London
 Dorian Gray Projects, John Jones Project Space, London

2005 Summer Exhibition, Ruth Bachofner Gallery, Los Angeles

P R O J E C T S

2008 Future50 PSL Project Space, Leeds, curated by Ceri Hand and Liz Aston

2007 Dorian Gray Project, John Jones Project Space, London
 Anticipation, One One One, Flora Fairbairn Projects, London, curated by Flora Fairbairn,
 Kay Saatchi and Catriona Warren

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

2018 David Rosenberg, Human Perspectives, Opera Gallery, Zurich, December
 Enguerrand Lascols; The Painter's Room, Opera Gallery, Paris, May

2017 Christian Longchamp; Masques et Spectres Notes pour une
 Dramaturgie, Opera National de Paris, December
 Danièle Perrier; Fragmented Figures, schultz contemporary, November
 Phoebe Hoban; Distorted Fragments, Damiani, June
 Katie Shuff; Reality Glitch, Schön Magazine, February

2016 Noah Becker: Suspended Reality, Opera Gallery NY, (catalogue), October
 Sohei Oshiro: Motion & Distortion, Them Magazine, June
 Noah Becker: Between Here and There, White Hot Magazine, May
 Noah Becker: Between Here and There, Opera Gallery London, (catalogue), May

2015 Christoph Tannert: The Granular Surfaces of Painting, Schultz Contemporary,
 Berlin, (catalogue), November
 Andreas Reusch: Figures & Interiors: Die Störung des Klaren
 Blickes, Schraege-O, June
 Andrea Micke: Bildstörung in der Ludwiggalerie Neue
 Kunstverein Ausstellung, WAZ, May

Jordan Lahmi: Sequences, Opera Gallery, Geneva, (catalogue), May
 Sasha Graybosh: Risk is Central to the Concept of Adventure, Canteen, May
 May Karin Dubert: Verzerzte Momente, Wochen Anzeiger Oberhausen, May
 Daniele Giustolisi: Andy Denzler in der Ludwiggalerie im Schloss Oberhausen, May
 Susanne Braun: Distorted Moments, Portal Kunstgeschichte, January
 2014 Ildegarda Scheidegger: The Power of the Painted Image, Ludwig Museum, (monograph), December
 Beate Reifenscheid: Distorted Moments, Ludwig Museum, (monograph), December
 Kristell Pfeifer: 100 Miradas, Arte Al Limite Art Magazin, November
 Fernando Galan: The Forgotten Palace, art.es Project 50, September
 Marc Valli and Margherita Dessanay: A Brush with the Real: Figurative Painting Today, Laurence King Publishing Ltd., March
 2013 Naoto Miyazaki: Interview Montem Magazin, December
 Nichelle Cole: Fetish for Andy Denzler, Rough Italia Magazine
 Billy Rood: Terrestrial Transmission, Glitch Paintings by Andy Denzler, FIFTY8 Magazine, December
 Ulrich Ptak: Interview, Dontpostme Magazine, October
 Michael Meyer: Serien des Menschlichen, Ostsee Zeitung, May
 Juliane Hinz: Zeitgenössische Kunst Dreimal Anders, Norddeutsche Neuste Nachrichten, May,
 Lin Urman: Interview, hDL Magazine, March
 Ulrich Ptak: Glitch Paintings, Kunsthalle Rostock, (catalogue), March
 P.L. Grand: Empire Inc., Kunsthalle Rostock, (catalogue), March
 Emanuela Amato: Sacrifice, Line Virtual Magazine, February
 Christsine Gorve: Interview, Liveoutloud Magazine, January
 2012 Kim Min-Kyeong: Hypnotized, Gwangju Museum of Art, April
 Sabin Bors: Intermediate Framings, Gwangju Museum of Art, (catalogue), April
 Ingeborg Ruthe: Die Unnahbare Berliner Zeitung, December
 Motion Pictures, Art Investor Magazine, September
 Anne C. Holmes: We Can Never Stake a Claim on Another Body, Dapper Dan Magazine, Fall
 Margherita Visentini: Interview, Trendland, September
 J.L Schnabel: The Art of Andy Denzler, HI Fructose Magazine, January
 2011 Der Kunstmaler, FELD100 Magazine, December
 Violet Shuraka: Interview Cheap & Plastic, November
 Margherita Dessanay: Cinematic Paintings, Elephant Magazine, No. 6
 Jolijn Snijders: Interview, ILOVEFAKE Magazine, September
 Richard Warren: Interview and Trends Scope, Identity Magazine, September
 Book Review: Mensch, The Human Nature Project, artensuite, August
 Simone Toellner: Interview, Untitled Magazine, July
 Nadine Brüggebors: The Human Nature Project, Hatje Cantz, (monograph), March
 2010 Russian Esquire Magazine, November
 Neue Maler bei Michael Schultz, Berliner Woche, August
 Gerhard Charles Rump: Erzählt, Gemalt, Verwischt: Andy Denzler in Berlin, Die Welt, July
 Florence Ritter: Distorted Fragments, Kinki Magazine, No. 27
 2009 Leonie Schilling: Brush Strokes of Movements, Art Global Allimite, No. 38
 2008 PSL (Project Space Leeds) and Axis by curator Ceri Hand and Liz
 Aston: Future50 the Most Interesting and Significant UK Artists of 2008
 Noah Becker: Interview, White Hot Magazine, Vol. 1
 Claudia Porchet: Entrückte Figuren in Einer Flüchtigen Welt, Tages Anzeiger
 Dr. Ulrike Fuchs: Short Cuts, Art Profil, No. 5
 Trevor Guthrie: Interview, White Hot Magazine Online
 Dr. Ulrike Fuchs: People in Motion, Palette, No. 4

2007 João Silvério: Insomnia, Filomena Soraes, (catalogue), March
 Hans-Joachim Müller: Letting it Appear, Galerie von Braunbehrens (catalogue) NYARTS Magazine, January
 Art Scene: A Day at the Shore
 2006 Douglas Lewis (curator): Space Between, University of the Arts London, Autumn Edition
 Lewis H. Lapham: The case for Impeachment, Why We Can No Longer Afford George W. Bush, Harper's US Magazine, March, 2nd print in October
 Tages-Anzeiger (Illustrated by A. Denzler), Zueritipp, Ausstellungen, February
 2005 Anni Dore: Culture vulture, Cream Magazine, September
 Martin Kraft: American Paintings, Gallery Kashya Hildebrand (catalogue)
 2004 Philip Meier: Kultur, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, September
 2003 Barbara Handke: Tages Anzeiger, February
 Martin Kraft: Space and Reality, Galerie Mönchhof, January
 2001 Volcker Schunck: Arresting Vision, Galerie Carzaniga + Ueker, Galerie Werner Bommer, (catalogue), August
 1996 Steven Loepfe: Abstrakte Bilder, (catalogue), February

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