

Dominik Lejman | *Step Aside*

Exhibition: 25 April – 15 June 2024



Persons Projects is proud to present Dominik Lejman's solo exhibition *Step Aside*, assembling a selection of works that focus on the perception of artworks as being both screens and painterly surfaces. Lejman is known to challenge and extend the definitions of artistic disciplines. By mixing paintings with video projections, the artist has created his very own medium that does not only overcome the limitations of painting, but initiates a new dialogue in how to perceive it. As one of the most established multimedia concept artists, Lejman has been exhibiting in numerous international shows and received, amongst others, the prestigious prize of the Akademie der Künste in 2018 for redefining the medium of painting.

To fully understand the visual realms of Dominik Lejman, it is important to know that his artworks can never be reduced neither to their physical form nor to the traditional understanding of the used media. Since his graduation as a painter from the Royal College of Art London, in 1995, Lejman has been exploring for the most significant way to articulate his critical visions. Stimulated by the boundaries of painting, Lejman has combined the surface of painting with layers of video projections for over two decades. Since then, he has been conceptually experimenting with painting and time-based media – leading to a kaleidoscope of different, often socially engaged narratives that unfold both in space and time.

In recent years, Lejman has often engaged in wider collaborations with other artists. These projects require meticulous preparation as well as an immense amount of respect and trust for one another. Works such as *The Pink Curtain (Reenactment with Bianca O'Brien)* and *Partition (with Maria Colusi)*, testify the results of fruitful artistic exchanges. The created harmonic symbiosis generates the full meaning of the artwork, for painting to serve as the stage, for the video projection to create a palimpsest of the missing performance. In his play with convention and genres, Lejman equally questions the unquestionable for the most and sees no problem in the problematic – where his painting remains the screen for negotiation, to quote the artist: “The show *Step Aside* is about the non-central gaze and the concept of anamorphism reframing the power of centrality – harnessing our perception in painting and visual culture in general.” By this, the artist invites you to take a ‘step aside’ – in order to gain new perspectives in how to interpret our relation with artworks, thereby initiating the process of questioning one’s own, so far unquestionable, ‘central position’.

For the series *When Painting Becomes Attitude* Lejman collaborated with the Argentinian dancer and choreographer Maria Colusi. Following their intuition as seasoned artists,

nothing about the final works were pre-planned. Lejman's and Colusi's flexibility and use of mixed media not only speaks to the confinements of each medium on their own, but allowed them to create a multifaceted body of work. The dancer's movements complete the dark minimalistic paintings in a most complete way – as the choreography incorporates the shape of the canvas, thereby putting an even bigger emphasis on the form and painting's surface.

For the project titled *Reenactment* Lejman started a collaboration with the British artist Bianca O'Brien. Initially created as part of the off-Venice Biennale pavilion "Madnicity" in 2022, the series displays a constructive discourse on stereotypes and common beliefs about mental disorders. Here, Lejman paired up his paintings with ephemeral ghostly scenes of a female figure, based both on religious representation in art history and photographic archives of the former mental hospital at San Servolo. The body is being presented as an object, directed frontally by a pair of hands, wrapped in a white cloth that seems to represent both a straightjacket, and a cloth taken directly from the Baroque tenebristic painting. The ephemeral projection emphasizes the innovative hybrid form of Lejman's works – stressing the absence of representation.

Dominik Lejman was born in 1969 in Gdańsk, Poland. He lives and works in Poznań and Berlin. As one of the most established multimedia concept artists, Lejman has been exhibiting in numerous international shows, including *Macht! Licht!*, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg (2022), *Sanguine/Bloedrood*, Prada Foundation, Milano (2018), *Still / Motion*, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography (2008), Polish Pavilion at the 9th Biennale di Venezia of Architecture (2004), 1st Prague Biennale (2003), and *After the Wall*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm (1999) /Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2000). In 2018, he received the prestigious prize of the Akademie der Künste in Berlin for redefining the medium of painting.