

## Brian Harte: X will mark the place

April 25th - Mai 25th, 2019

The richly detailed and chaotic spaces depicted in Brian Harte's paintings invariably draw the viewer's attention, as the eye repeatedly comes across familiar elements and symbols that are then lost again amidst the judicious chaos of the dense colours and composition as quickly as they appeared. A tile pattern in the background might recall a kitchen backsplash, for instance, whilst elsewhere you might detect the outline of something like a teacup or a knife. Shapes resembling the markings on a football pitch, on the other hand, open up room to play with motifs and pictures within the picture. One thing you won't find, however, is anything solid to hold onto. The rooms and objects suggested appear to float on the surface of the painting, while hints of perspective, three-dimensionality and spaciousness further emphasise the flatness of the canvas. This flatness counteracts the perception of depth in the image at critical moments, so that ultimately, the distance between viewer and image cannot be overcome. In the world of Harte's imagery, we are outsiders, left behind even when we appear to be close to grasping their complexity. This creates a sense of tension on the canvas that seeks to engage the gaze. Harte's paintings have something deeply psycho-logical about them, something that remains unfathomable. Their small, identifiable components in the midst of impenetrable swathes of colour locate them at the intersection of the conscious and the unconscious, playing with the relationships between the inner self and its immediate, concrete surroundings.

This peculiar degree of uncertainty is not only integral to the experience of viewing Harte's paintings, it's also a constitutive aspect of the creation of the images themselves. Harte's continuous process as he paints each day in the little studio behind his house is primarily intuitive, allowing fresh impressions from his home and family to find their way into his paintings; though it remains difficult to order them into any sort of personal narrative. In this way, his work as a whole takes on the form of an unstructured archive of everyday experiences, sensations and objects, compiled by Harte and presented to the viewer in an all but unfiltered form. Thus documentary like, he leaves traces of himself in the world – lasting proof of his existence. He also incorporates other material, such as old photographs, especially in his most recent paintings. These evoke a mix of memories, both painful and pleasurable, and demonstrate that for Harte, the past is a component in our experience of the present. His recent works above all interrogate the normalcy of the tangible features of our existence. In other words, he questions everything from the structure of life with his wife and children to the nature of simple household items to the colour of the walls in his kitchen. As such, the uncertainty when one looks at Harte's paintings becomes even more pronounced. Nothing in the worlds he depicts is self-evident; on the contrary, most of their elements raise questions or create confusion. As viewers, we set ourselves the same task as Harte faces in his work: to investigate impressions of everyday life and ask ourselves what they provoke in us.

Klara Niemann

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### **About the artist**

Brian Harte (born in 1978 in South Tipperary, Ireland) lives and works in Ireland. He studied painting at the Crawford College of Art and Design, Cork, graduating with a first-class honours degree in 2002. His work has been presented in numerous solo and group shows and is held in both private and public collections. As Ffrench/Harte he has also worked collaboratively on large sculptural projects with fellow Irish artist Anne Ffrench. He has been the recipient of several awards and residencies including the Arts Council of Ireland's Project Award on two occasions. Recent group shows include Human Condition, The Hospital, Western Ave and ICM, Constellation Blvd., Los Angeles and his most recent exhibition in Germany „Now is the Time“ at Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg.

### **Über den Künstler**

Brian Harte (1978 geb. in South Tipperary, Irland) lebt und arbeitet in Irland. Er studierte Malerei am Crawford College für Kunst und Design in Cork und schloss sein Studium 2002 mit einem erstklassigen Abschluss ab. Seine Arbeiten wurden in zahlreichen Einzel- und Gruppen-Ausstellungen präsentiert. Ebenso sind sie sowohl in privaten und öffentlichen Sammlungen vertreten. Als Ffrench/Harte arbeitete er gemeinsam mit der irischen Künstlerin Anne Ffrench auch an großen skulpturalen Projekten. Er erhielt bereits mehrfach Auszeichnungen, darunter den Project Award des Arts Council of Ireland. Seine letzten Gruppenshows waren an folgenden Orten zu sehen: Human Condition, The Hospital, Western Ave, ICM, Constellation Blvd., Los Angeles. Seine neueste Ausstellung „Now is the Time“ wird im Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg in Deutschland gezeigt.

