

## Philipp Kremer - Gatherings, by Vincent van Velsen

In his most recent work Philipp Kremer has moved towards the subject of sexual encounters between people. This new subject matter is firstly approached as an idea, a thought, and a construction as a result of an objective thinking process and related research. In this process the artists touched on the themes of media (internet), pornography, gender, idealism, community and individualism. Kremer finds the nude an unavoidable direction in his oeuvre and in that sense considers this step a direct consequence of his practice, and figurative painting in general. Nude bodies are the essence - or (literal) base - of the human appearance, and in that sense of figurative painting concerning humans. Here he relates to religious paintings (the bodies of saints, St. Sebastian or the flesh of Christ Himself) and 17th century Dutch painting (voluptuous bodies by Rubens for example), in which the depiction of fabric, skin and surfaces were of main importance to prove ones craftsmanship. The thin brushstrokes in Kremer's practice show a great ability and dexterity in using his materials in order to reach his pictorial goals.

Generally, in this new series sex is not used as a teaser; a corny mode of catching attention or a perverse provocation towards an audience, but as an honest reflection on human interaction in one of its most basic, free and instinctive modes. A varied group of people who are performing various kinds of sexual practices and preferences is presented. In this sense one perceives an orgy of diversity; meaning gender, hetero- and homogeneity as well as several modes of sexual interaction. At the same time the colouring is chosen in a way that it relates to monochrome paintings and (thereby) via its soft colouring in ocher - a colour close to the tones of the human skin that also lies close to dirt and gold at the same time. This element does not provoke any arousal, but induces the idea of an abstract depiction of people and their relations - in a way more subtle manner than Jeff Koons did in his Made in Heaven series; to which Kremer's paintings to a certain extent relate to. The carefully composed bodies are painted in a soft and thin layered mode, but applying precise shading and forms carefully. Also, there is no main focus within the composition. All bodies are equal and relate to each other in manifold modes. It is impossible to focus at one abstract individual at once, due to the fact that one person always interacts with

another human being on the canvas. The gaze of the spectator therefore flows over the bodies, from one to the next, discovering new elements, details, affiliations and flesh. In that sense, everyone is equal, similar and simultaneously fore- and background. Furthermore, the monochromatic aspect balances out the explicit visuals and thereby moves the subject away from perversity, towards a genuine reflection on an action. This action and its related visual content fills a great part of the internet. The fact that most people interact with this type of content in an individual, private context, addresses the idea and paradox of community, related individuality and spectatorship - or voyeurism. These elements are all present within the frame of the canvas at the same time; but it also relates to the subject matter in general and thereby pertains its audience. The experimentalist nature of the works of Philipp Kremer are rooted in the extensive history of painting, as well as the artistic modes that related to crossing boundaries, or using (appropriating and adapting) mass-media imagery within an artistic context.