

## SECUNDINO HERNÁNDEZ

### One more time is good enough

**Duration:**  
**May 20 – June 27, 2020**

Secundino Hernández, who lives and works in Madrid, started his international gallery-déput with his eponymous exhibitions following a Residency at Krinzinger Projekte in 2007.

Just five years later, he made his breakthrough in the international art scene by selling six works to the Rubell Family Collection at a presentation at ARCO Madrid 2012. Today Secundino Hernández, with his large-format paintings, is one of the international artists who shapes the contemporary art market. His frenetic oil, gouache and acrylic paintings refer to action painting, the old masters, especially Spanish ancestors like El Greco and Velázquez but also to the paintings by Cy Twombly, Francis Picabia and Joan Miró.

Secundino Hernández's exhibition *One More Time Is Good Enough* at the Galerie Krinzinger presents three series of works from the past three years. Here we will see a broad spectrum of his abstract painting, which can be described as opulent, colorful, expressionist, but also monochrome and ascetically minimalist.

In his screen prints on brown cardboard from 2020, informal complexes of form float on the picture surface where the creative process work unfolds, highlighting the artist's graphic action. These traces, which are condensed into compact forms and signs, are roughly placed, reminiscent of the structure of a woodcut when the artist lacerates the unwieldy wood with gouges, knives, or a milling machine. As in the white-line cut in a woodcut relief-printing process, in the flat screen printing process used here the treated areas remain unprinted and do not absorb ink, but the brown cardboard in this case does and functions as the picture surface. Thus the negative areas become abstract marks and signs within the pictorial composition. Techniques of subtraction—the removing, cutting out, erasing, washing off—are often be found in Hernández's artistic process. And this approach is also part of the two further series presented in the exhibition. As with the screens prints, the black picture ground dominates in the paintings created in 2020. In place of the color-neutral negative forms, the canvas is now filled with a painterly, coloristic opulence. Brushstrokes and dabs of paint cover the entire picture surface, creating an informal color mosaic of picturesque discharges. Their dull sparkle is like dirty gemstones emerging from the black ground. Or perhaps the artist has uncovered these stones from the dim black crust of paint by sanding or rinsing the surface.

The third group of works is part of the *Wash Paintings*, a series the artist had already begun in 2016. After the painting process, Hernández attacks the canvas with a pressure washer and rinses the original membrane of the painting. What remains, remains forever. This grandly aggressive gesture leads to a purging of the picture. The easel painting is, however, not destroyed, murdered, in contrast to the *Toiles brûlées* of the 1970s by his Spanish compatriot Joan Miró, who sought to do precisely this. Miró set his paintings on fire or slit them with a knife. With Hernández, it is more an aquatic skinning, a process of subtraction from which, in turn, pure painting can emerge. Think, in comparison, of *Nouveaux Réalistes* such as Mimmo Rotella and Raymond Hains, who décollaged billboards and used them to create compositions with a painterly structure. The new *Wash Paintings* reveal a purified force, their scaffolding uncovered, as it were, which is manifest in the graphic network of vertical and diagonal lines. These are not drawn or painted lines, but rather physical-organic lines consisting of seams. The artist cut the body of the canvas into several pieces and then had it carefully sewn back together again. What emerges is a prismatic pictorial field that allows a complex and broken pictorial space to unfold. This space is not derived from reality, but rather an abstract space intrinsic to the painting, comparable to the broken spatial system in Analytical Cubism. In contrast to Picasso, however, with Hernandez there is no centrally moored pictorial object—a pitcher or figure—around which spatiality is constructed. While Picasso shattered the mirror of reality, Hernandez skins the body of painting by washing it, revealing the bones, the inner space of abstract easel painting. Yet this abstract space—structured by graphic configurations—is always bound to the factual nature of painting, its surface. A similar relationship between line/scaffolding and surface/space can be noted in Piet Mondrian's orthogonal, Neo-Plastic compositions as well as in the Minimalist grid paintings of Agnes Martin or Brice Marden. With regard to the painterly surface, Robert Ryman's guiding principle can apply: "The painting is exactly what you see." The painting consists simply of materials such as the support (canvas, paper) and the paint applied. All illusionism is suppressed to the benefit of f/actual two-dimensionality and painterly craft. With an aim of neutralizing, Ryman limited himself to the non-color white, which he carefully applied with the brush to the canvas or another support to form the square ground of the painting. This Rymanian aspect of painting is also visible in Hernandez's recent white *Wash Paintings*. In some spots the untreated canvas appears; the painting resembles masonry on which the plaster has loosened. The strictly minimalistic is relativized by what appears ruinous. One might also think of Jean Dubuffet's wall paintings. The recent dark *Wash Paintings* with their shades of gray, pigeon blue, and black constitute the nocturnal alter ego of these luminous white paintings. They develop a darkly romantic atmosphere, like a flowing veil that leads us into a transcendental world. As with the white paintings, they are vertical in orientation, structured by the strips of canvas that have been stitched together in a predominantly upright fashion. These paintings are based on a dualistic moment of destruction and construction. Here the artist renounces the purely creative signature in the form of a charged gesture—manifested in Abstract Expressionism as a loaded brushstroke—and with the pressure washer chooses a destructive tool, one that works on the basis of chance, to destroy his previously laid painterly traces and create a new painting from them. Jackson Pollock also operated with planned chance in his drip paintings, letting the paint drip on the canvas from

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a distance—in contrast to brush and pencil that can be used in a much more controlled way with direct contact to the surface.

Secundino Hernández showed for the first time with Galerie Krinzinger in 2007, when he was invited to take part in the Artist in Residence program in Vienna and presented his paintings in the spaces of Krinzinger Projekte. Unlike his more recent abstract work, his paintings at that time were strongly figurative, but not in the classical sense of portraits or realistic representations of people. They were rather figurative abbreviations of hands, feet, and heads that grew out of the informal painterly surface. Grotesque anomalies emerged, a pastiche of Surrealist *écriture automatique*, caricatured *cadavre exquis*. Around 2010, this hybrid figurative-abstract system began to give way to a more abstract, calligraphically gestural circulating and floating over the picture surface. Here drawing and painting merged: graphic shorthand, scrawls with splotches of paint, brushstrokes. Together they produced an exuberant, dynamic floating in the pictorial space. In some instances one could still find lingering figurative rudiments, cartoon-like remnants. Glistening traces of black, looking as if they were drawn with a felt-tip pen, sitting literally on the surface of the picture, while the finely drawn lines, daubs of paint, and brushstrokes burst into the surrounding space. This accumulation of innumerable traces and complexes of form resemble a cosmic explosion in galactic space. The painting is freed from the force of gravity, no longer bound to the horizon of any landscape. Yet there is an exception—a larger series of works from 2012–13 in which the artist still integrated strictly horizontal strips of color, lending the paintings a landscape-like dimension. One of these cosmic-dynamic compositions of pictorial space was presented in the 2017 exhibition *Abstract Painting Now!* at the Kunsthalle Krems, which presented an overview of the current state of nonrepresentational art internationally. The broad spectrum shown reflected positions from the minimalist, constructive, and ornamental to the gestural and processual. The exhibition spanned from the 1970s, beginning with Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke, to the generation of Katharina Grosse and Secundino Hernández. It was the year before that first saw a painting by the Spanish artist. At Vienna Contemporary 2016, Galerie Krinzinger showed an opaque-gray painting with traces of *Art Informel*. I then immersed myself in Hernández's universe of painting, which is best described as a dazzling kaleidoscope of abstract art: graphic-painterly, impasto-minimal, spatial-planar, light-dark, skin and bones, destruction and construction, chance and control, emotional sensual, and cool minimalist.

(Text: Florian Steininger, Director, Kunsthalle Krems)

**Secundino Hernández** (born. 1975 in Madrid) studied at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid. In the last years his works were exhibited in numerous museums and art institutions. Selection of solo exhibitions: Meadows Museum at the Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, (2020), Taidehalli Helsinki, (2018), CAC - Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga (2018), YUZ Museum, Shanghai (2015), The Miettinen Collection, Maison Louis Carré, Bazoches-sur-Guyonne (2014), Rubell Family Collection / Contemporary Arts Foundation, Miami (2013); Selection of group exhibitions: Mirat, Madrid, Spain (2019); Taguchi Art Collection, Japan (2017), Kunsthalle Krems (2017), Royal Academy of the Arts, London (2017), Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Español, Valladolid (2013); Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2012), Art Center Los Angeles, Los Angeles (2011), Roger Raveel Museum, Machelen (2010); Secundino Hernández's works are part of important institutional and private collections for instance at the Museo Patio Herreriano, Valladolid, in the Helga de Alvear-Foundation, the Rubell Family Collection, Miami in the Kunstdepot Göschenen and the Art Gallery of Ontario; Selection of awards: Generación 2007 de Caja Madrid (first prize); Generación 2004 de Caja Madrid; Premio Joven 2003, Fundación General der Universidad Complutense de Madrid; Generación 2002 de Caja, Madrid (recognition award)

**Solo exhibitions at Galerie Krinzinger:** 2015 *Today*, 2014 *Four Season: Between Winter and Spring* and 2010 *Indigenismo*

**Solo exhibitions at Krinzinger Projekte:** 2007 *Secundino Hernández* (Artist in Residence)

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If you do not have a face mask yourself, we will provide one on site.