

Giò Marconi is very pleased to announce “*The Social Democrat*”, the second solo exhibition at the gallery by Paris-based American artist Will Benedict.

Will Benedict’s eclectic practice emphasizes the dialogue between the different media of painting, drawing, photography and increasingly also film. Deconstructing conventions of representation, Benedict’s work incorporates disparate elements, addresses contemporary issues but is also imbued with a sense of incongruity and ambivalence.

The predominant motif in Will Benedict’s practice is that of the “picture in the picture”. His paintings in gouache on canvas are mounted within larger panels of foam board where photographs or (smaller) paintings are integrated as part of the final composition and set in aluminium and glass frames. The smaller canvas inserts depict a wide spectrum from colourful Parisian street scenes, to yellow-golden cornfields, from female portraits to the contours of countries, from body fragments to abstract figurations.

Even though Benedict’s pictures are based on the method of collage, they do not aim at fragmenting the picture, but on the contrary appear surprisingly homogeneous.

This repertoire of such composite multi-media pictures forms the core of his exhibitions. At Giò Marconi Will Benedict presents a series of new large-scale works. On display are seemingly abstract paintings that merge into bicolored landscapes as well as billowy wheat field vistas, all of which are embedded into the typically painted frames. Also exhibited is the video “I AM A PROBLEM (T.O.D.D.)”, Will Benedict’s take on the migrant crisis, which had premiered at last year’s Berlin Biennial.

In the current political times of right-wing upheaval and strong nationalistic sentiments which climaxed in the Brexit and the election of Donald Trump last year, the title of the exhibition “The Social Democrat” gives the show a decisively political meaning and makes it sound like an epitaph to a long-gone century and long-lost ideals.

“*The Social Democrat*” is presented in conjunction with “*Fiction is a terrible enemy*”, Will Benedict’s solo exhibition at Fondazione Giuliani in Rome.

Will Benedict (b. 1978, Los Angeles) is an artist living in Paris, France. His work has recently been included in the 9th Berlin Biennial (2016), the 10th Nicaragua Biennial (2016) and the 31st Ljubljana Biennial (2015).

Recent solo exhibitions include *Law and Order*, Simon Lee, Hong Kong (2017); *I AM A PROBLEM*, Rob Tufnell, London (2016); *Bad Weather*, Overduin & Co., Los Angeles (2015); *A Bone in the Cheese*, Bortolami, New York (2015); *Corruption Feeds*, Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen,

Norway (2014); *Comparison Leads to Violence*, Balice Hertling, Paris (2014). He has also curated the exhibitions *Nuclear War: What's in it for you?*, Vilma Gold, London (2014); *Vertical Club*, Bortolami, New York (2013) and *Commercial Psycho*, Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York (2012).

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