

AMORPHIDIAN

CHRISTIAN ACHENBACH

Galerie ISA is proud to welcome back German painter and sculptor Christian Achenbach (b. 1978, Siegen, Germany) for his second solo exhibition. Titled *Amorphidian*, this new showcase features Achenbach's largest work to date, *Kreola*, spanning over five meters.

Rooted in the major movements of 20th-century art history and viewed through the lens of postmodernism, Achenbach's landscapes are not tied to a specific place or culture but are a reflection of the artist's views of the world and also the very act of painting, an experience that is both physical and visceral.

In this series, Achenbach, also presents his most substantial (and substantive) work to date. *Kreola*, at a striking five meters, commands space and attention. This large format invites the viewer into an immersive experience and an alternate reality—one that envelops the body and senses, creating the sensation of being not just in front of the work, but within it: wholly submerged, consumed, and surrounded.

For the artist, nature is a profound visual resource and also the very core of our existence. Within the conventions and strictures of landscape paintings, he finds freedom in movement, incorporating influences and references from a wide range of sources, eras and themes. Achenbach strongly believes that the motif of a work is secondary to whether it ultimately becomes a work of art; the journey, he suggests, is as important—if not more so—than the final result. Consequently, his practice is constantly challenging the status quo, aiming to create pieces that are both formally coherent and visually compelling.

But nature is not his only source of inspiration. While previous works have included playful, joyous nods to Cubism, Dadaism, and Modernism, Achenbach is equally invested in exploring the traditions and practices of other movements—Impressionism, Constructivism, Asian landscape painting, and Abstraction—all of which contribute to his evolving visual language. A lifelong student of art history, Achenbach has drawn on a wide range of artists and movements for seminal moments in his career. His recent explorations include the pointillist painter Henri Edmond Cross, Op Art icon Bridget Riley, abstract expressionist Joan Mitchell, Mexican modernist Rufino Tamayo, and American postwar landscape painter Milton Avery.

A singular influence on Achenbach's practice is music. Like Kandinsky, he believes in the materiality of sound and the auditory nature of painting. The rhythm of each piece is integral to his oeuvre. Synesthesia—the neurological phenomenon in which one sensory experience triggers another—is central to his process. As in a great musical composition, his work embraces the taut strings of tension: the constant interplay between control and chance, graphic and expressive elements, structure and spontaneity—all resolving into a kind of dissonant harmony.

Achenbach uses colour boldly and liberally—stirring, provoking, and activating all the senses. Each painting begins with a base of heavily diluted black acrylic, which, once dry, forms an atmospheric structure. Over this foundation, he draws with pastel chalks, allowing organic compositions to emerge. This is followed by an extended period of painting in oil, using both glazed, translucent layers and dense impasto techniques. To achieve a high level of colour intensity, some pigments are applied in multiple layers, building depth and luminosity through deliberate repetition.

It is in the vibrancy and dark intensity of his colour palette, in the dismantling of classical frameworks, and in the ongoing negotiation between fluidity and structure that Achenbach finds his métier—building, stacking, and evolving a practice that continues to expand the language of painting.

- Priyanka R. Khanna