

BRUCE SILVERSTEIN

Max Neumann | *Specter*
November 15, 2018 – January 5, 2019



Bruce Silverstein Gallery is pleased to announce its third solo exhibition of new works by Berlin-based artist Max Neumann. This special presentation, entitled *Specter*, will include a suite of both large-format and modestly scaled new oil paintings, which fuse the artist's characteristic layering techniques with inflections of both subtle and vibrant color.

Known for his haunting portraits, Neumann continues his visual explorations of complex human emotion defined by singular stares. The anonymous characters that populate Neumann's world are vacant shadow figures acting as witness to all facets of the human condition. His nameless subjects represent the faces of all mankind, without reference to race, nationality, or age—the kinds of specters found lurking deep in one's unconscious, walking around in our dreams. His is a language of suffering as a state of being, rather than the contextualized experience given to us by his fellow German predecessors, such as Georg Baselitz, Anselm Kiefer, and Gerhard Richter. While these three artists often produce work related to a more distinct history, Neumann's paintings encompass an over-arching psychological narrative devoid of definition.

In the face of this sweeping visual lexicon, the viewer is left to piece together details. Collective history and personal memories are often intertwined and rewritten into a space detached from place and time. This notion is physically manifested on Neumann's canvases where oil and acrylic are wiped together, then scraped with various tools—revealing a multitude of layers. Known for his prodigious use of black, the deeply pigmented paint takes on the quality of a material or technique, not merely a color. Neumann's process is a kind of reconstruction that leads to engaging with his paintings as a “chance to conjure something in the viewer simply by looking.” (Max Neumann interviewed by Joachim Sartorius for *The White Review*, September 2013).

Neumann has been exhibiting his paintings since the 1970s, and his work has been the subject of over 150 solo exhibitions to date. Much of the artist's work is part of many notable collections, including the Neue Nationalgalerie Berlin, Germany; Berlinische Galerie, State Museum of Modern Art, Photography and Architecture, Germany; Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Germany; Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany; Hamburger Kunsthalle, Germany; Schleswig-Holstein State Museum, Gottorf, Germany; Maeght Foundation, St. Paul de Vence, France; Caen Museum, France; Oviedo Museum, Spain; Seibu Museum, Tokyo, Japan; Museum Hiroshima, Japan; the Museum of Modern Art, Toyama, Japan, and the Deutsche Bank Collection, Luxembourg, Brussels. Born in 1949, Neumann lives and works in Berlin.