

Flash Art

Jutta Koether

Bortolami / New York

Thin washes and streaks of nacreous paint on white canvas only reveal themselves if you shift your gaze. Light bronzes, pinks, silvers, primroses and whites thus appear in time as well as space, painterly specters passing through like clouds or other forms of changing weather. Like the artist's recent exhibitions "Champrovent" at Reena Spaulings Fine Art, New York, and "Maquis" at Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich, this form of altering apprehension is one of the defining features of Jutta Koether's exhibition "Fortune" at Bortolami. While the layout of those earlier shows was more direct — hanging paintings from pillars or creating extra walls to control lighting conditions — here the hanging is magisterially frieze-like. Each painting centrally occupies its own wall, bringing to mind the turning of a wheel, the changing of the seasons — foundations for other painting cycles: Botticelli, Poussin and Twombly come first to mind.

A flickering between ages and eras also appears in sketchily painted forms. In *Formula Won Balthus* (all works 2015), a triumphant, fully leathered Lewis Hamilton, painted mostly with pinky-red lines, stands raising his fist in victory, framed by a circle (the image is taken from a Mercedes ad). Watery tears of paint stream down his body from his eyes, blurring his lines. He stands above a sleeping figure scalped from Balthus's pastoral idyll *The Mountain* (1936–37); they seem to share the space, or perhaps not at all. The two final paintings in the exhibition depict a handshake between Queen Elizabeth II and Angelina Jolie at Buckingham Palace — a meeting of two queens, two regal systems. Koether's notes suggest "a possibility of being touched across power systems and ages." One of the paintings is constructed from two conjoined canvases in which hands meet in the space between them. All around the exhibition, forms of fused temporalities reach out to the viewer through shimmering material. The touch makes us feel coeval with other moments, other spirits, and we register a change in our own weather.

by Laura McLean-Ferris