

**Joe Fyfe**

*Lob des Lernens*

Exhibition: 15.11.2019 – 20.12.2019

Opening reception: Friday, 15 November 2019, 6-9 pm

With the exhibition *Lob des Lernens*, Joe Fyfe presents his latest group of works at Galerie Christian Lethert. The discovery of Berthold Brecht's poetry inspired the New York based artist to integrate text fragments into his paintings made of various fabrics and thus create poetic collages.

>>I came across Brecht's poetry by accident in a library. I had recently exhibited a group of paintings that had included painted texts in French utilizing the pictograph poems of Guillaume Apollinaire, so it was natural to move on to Brecht, though I had to rearrange the poems typographically, unlike the Apollinaire.

I had only begun introducing hand-painted texts to my painting recently, but as I made the works I remembered a moment years past, when I was sitting in the restaurant of the Hotel Chelsea in Köln early one morning having coffee, and there were two local men at the bar who had obviously been celebrating all night. One of them kept loudly reciting some phrase in English that he didn't know over & over. I think he liked the sound of it. I think of this now as the most important precedent for the new paintings.

Being a typical American, I don't speak French or German, but being that I am an abstract painter, the texts, when I painted them, reverted to an abstract state because I forgot what they meant, though I only used poems that I liked, having read them in translation. What appealed to me about Brecht, among many other things, was his concreteness & his preoccupation with form, along with his politics. He seems to me now to be my most important artistic figure, along with Baudelaire.

My impetus has always been to push the painting to its limits. I have been preoccupied with its physicality, and have tried to use an assortment of materials in order to do this. I am someone who feels that he began understanding painting from inside of painting culture and has attempted to make work that tries to break out, or at least open the door, to the world outside of it.

So the materials, the cut up banners from Asia and elsewhere, the recent introduction of text from poetry, are autobiographical but that is also beside the point, as they are arbitrary: they are things in my life that are conveniently at hand so there seems to be no reason not to put them in paintings. What this means is that the fact of the paintings as paintings is of more concern to me than the subject matter. But I continue to enjoy reading Brecht, such as the poem *Lob des Lernens*.<<

Joe Fyfe, born 1952 in New York City, USA. He has been exhibiting internationally and has been publishing art criticism and essays extensively for the past twenty years. In 2015 he received the New York City Artadia Award.

From 15 to 17 November we will again be represented at *Art Düsseldorf* and from 5 to 8 December we will be exhibiting at *NADA Miami*. Furthermore, we are pleased to announce the opening of our next group show on 31 January 2020.