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"Dada and Surrealist tactics" : The Scope of Thomas Scheibitz



Thomas Scheibitz, Installation view, "Argos Eyes", Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, NY.

Photo: Jason Wyche/Courtesy the artist and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York / Los Angeles

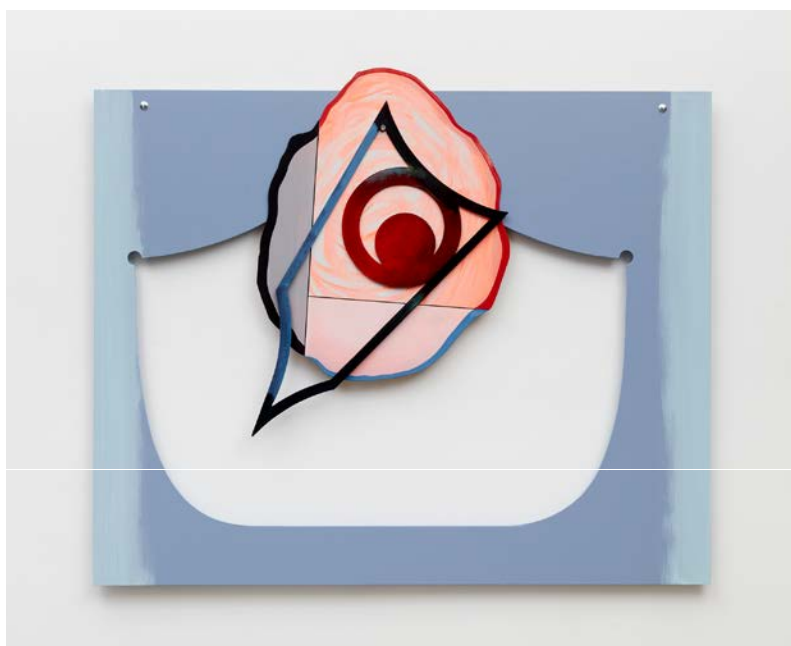
By **EDWARD WAISNIS** March 18, 2025

This being the eleventh of Thomas Scheibitz's exhibitions at the gallery over seventeen years, the previous one was five years ago, provides an update on the maturing work of a painter of international stature. Scheibitz delivers a surfeit of eye-popping color that has become a part of his signature that maintains Neo Geo tooling worthy of Peter Halley while retaining a touch of the cool mystery one encounters with Giorgio de Chirico. Blend in the measured finesse of Roy Lichtenstein, sans the punctilious remove, and, well, you get the picture—literally.

Scheibitz traipses through these precedents with disregard, forging discovery, providing a multitude of openings, from pure optics to mind teasers that would be enticing to the mindset of a gamer. The appeal would extend to dedicated fashionistas. Painting is, try as we might to deny it, a commodity attested to by today's rabid thirst for it.

One of the more curious outings for Scheibitz staged at The Museum Berggruen put his work against their substantial holdings of Picasso, acknowledging the starkness of the contrast as well as the parallels between the master and the contemporary standard-bearer.

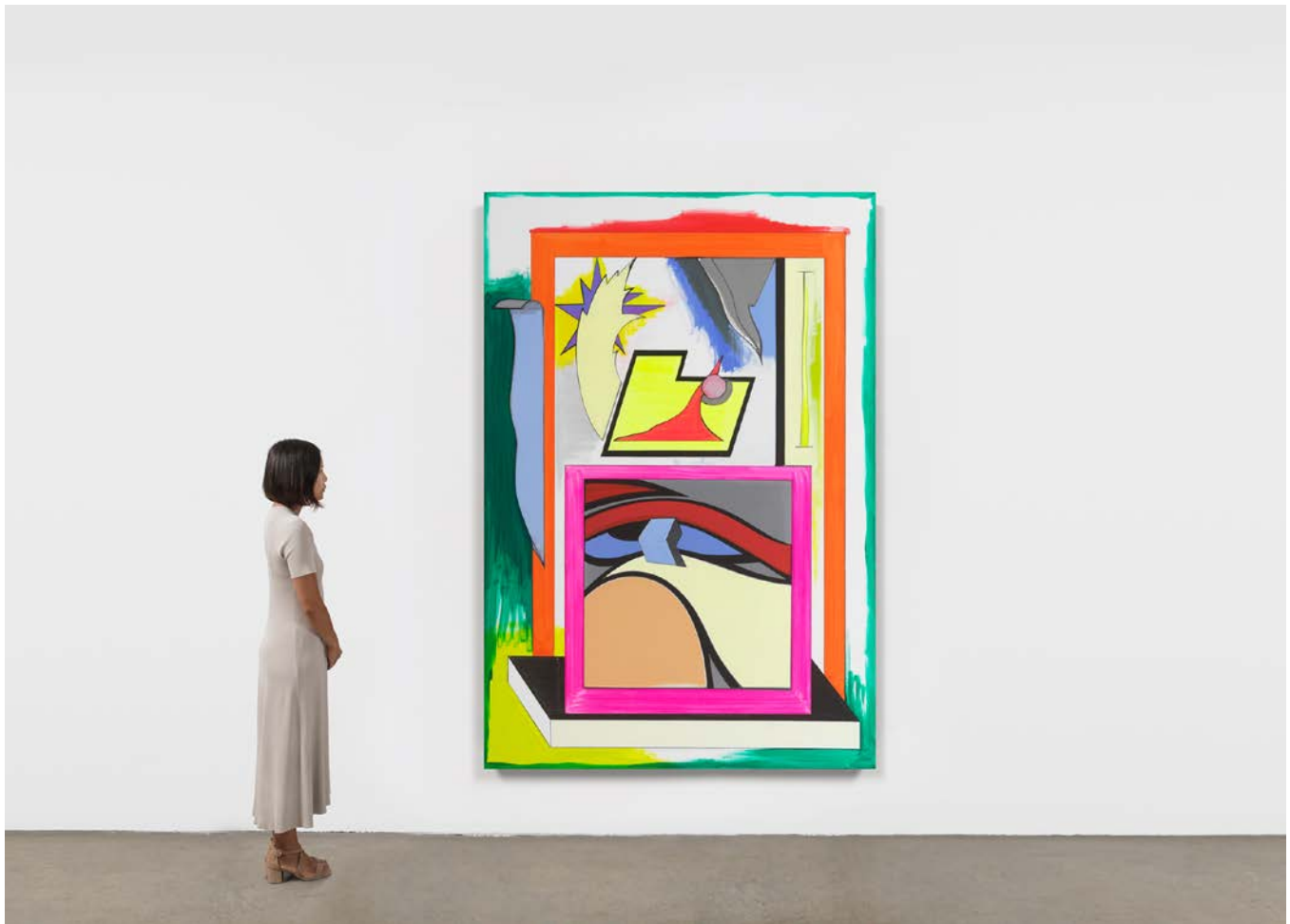
Introduced under the moniker, *Argos Eyes*, that nods to mythology by name-checking the many-eyed giant known for his vigilance, a perfect analogy for our age of digital stimulant overload in addition to Scheibitz's manic, but highly ordered, practice that revolves entirely around perception.



Thomas Scheibitz, "Auge und Himmel", 2025, Wood, mdf, hdf, colored, 50 3/4 x 61 1/4 x 2 3/4 inches. Courtesy the artist and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York / Los Angeles

Mounted on the two levels (i.e. all available exhibition space) the show kicks off with *Auge und Himmel*, 2025, holding pole position, it codifies one of the stencils (center-mounted on a scroll cut panel creating a bas-relief) employed in the composing of the paintings that line the walls with a wink and a grin worthy of a barn owl known to keep an eye to the sky (the German title translated to English is: 'eye and sky').

Zuege, 2017, in the flavor of a quaint European roadside figure from the 1960s, sits as a center pivot in the ground floor gallery around which the panoply of paintings orbit. From varied vantages the blocky open frame that suffices for a head services as a parallax viewfinder that offers a multitude of perspectives, an attribute of import to Scheibitz. If this thing could walk it would lunge and thrust with the with the the lurch of Frankenstein's monster crossed with Gumby.





*Thomas Scheibitz, "Argos Eyes" (Detail), 2024, Oil, vinyl and pigment marker on canvas, 98 1/2 x 66 3/4 inches.
Courtesy the artist and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York / Los Angeles*

Ranging from human to mural in scale, with a couple of diminutive ones thrown in as accents, the eponymously titled *Argos Eyes*, 2024, acts as a compendium mirroring the themes and concerns being emitted all around in intense reverberation.

Line work of a graphic novel sort is among Scheibitz's forte. His rendering of indecipherable narratives relies on fleet draftsmanship and is buoyed with intense passages of color that go to the fluorescent. In his choice of pigments Flashe * plays a pivotal role, offering something akin to an organic surface by means of the suede like finish, evocative of clay, it achieves with an otherworldly sheen. All wrapped up in taste and sophistication, tailored as well-dressed tablets.



Thomas Scheibitz, "Luna Park III", 2024, Oil, vinyl and mixed media on canvas, 57 1/2 x 37 5/8 inches. Courtesy the artist and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York / Los Angeles

Luna Park III, 2024, leers over the proceedings with a gimlet eye surrounded by the sleepy interior of an after hours lounge, or the shutdown amusement park that it's title evokes.

Panic Room, 2024, one of two of the wall-sized works, brought up the elegant chill of a locale in a high Modern film (think: Antonioni), a Milan haute couture showroom, or the confines of a well apportioned walk-in closet.



Thomas Scheibitz, "Profil", 2024, Vinyl and mixed media on canvas, 19 7/8 x 15 3/4 inches. Courtesy the artist and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York / Los Angeles

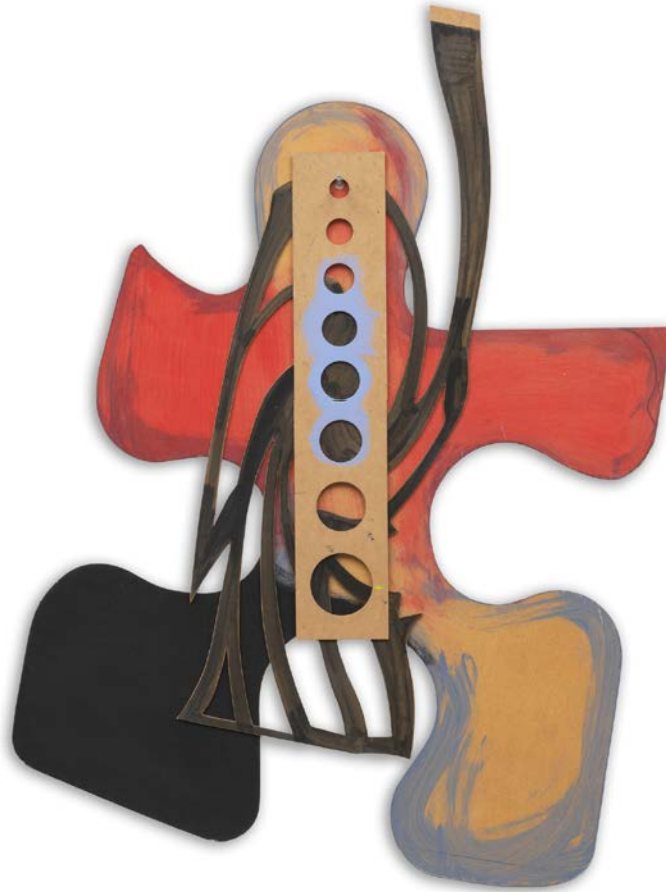
Upstairs easel-minded works predominate and lean towards the cozy embrace of awkwardness one finds in two currently hot historical, at times marginalized, painters: Francis Picabia and Raoul De Keyser. There is evidence of some blend of the feeling of late Jasper Johns writ as study in some of these smaller works. Highlights include: *Killing Joke*; *Comic X*; and *Profil*, all 2024. In this selection, I have opted toward the paintings that exude the lean, mathematically-inclined, élan that Scheibitz excels at.

Another earlier (and smaller, suiting the scaled-down installation) sculpture *Figurenstück*, of 2010, holds the center filling out the suite. The hybrid form offers little concrete resolution and is finished to a John McCracken polychrome polish; comparison as an eccentric Ronald Bladen might not be far off the mark either.



Thomas Scheibitz, "Display Table", 2025, Various materials, 21 1/4 x 85 1/8 x 33 inches (installed). Courtesy the artist and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York / Los Angeles

The adjoining gallery, referred to as the Project Room leads in with stencils, jauntily mounted, echoing Marcel Duchamp's stoppages. Holding court *Display Table*, 2025, yet another compendium, this time in three-dimensions forms of forty pieces from studio tools to items that caught the artist's fancy, all arranged on the flat expanse of a well-edged white table top. Within the arrangements one can follow the avenues and back alleys of Scheibitz's formulations.



Thomas Scheibitz, "Relief 2", 2025, Wood, mdd, colored, 55 1/8 x 42 1/8 x 2 3/4 inches. Courtesy the artist and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York / Los Angeles

Relief 1 und Relief 2 (beide 2025) sind entweder die verspielten Beigaben der Ausstellung oder deuten auf eine neue Richtung hin. Diese Kompositionen aus flachen Elementen, die sonst als Ephemera betrachtet würden, verwandeln sich in lebendige und charmante Figuren. Sie zeugen von einer ernsthaften Auseinandersetzung mit den Taktiken des Dadaismus und Surrealismus

* A vinyl-based paint, known for intense concentrated colors and opaque coverage and a matte finish, uniquely marketed by the French firm LeFranc & Bourgeois.

Thomas Scheibitz: *Argos Eyes*

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery (<https://www.tanyabonakdargallery.com/exhibitions/849-thomas-scheibitz-argos-eyes-tanya-bonakdar-gallery-new-york/>)

521 West 21st Street, New York

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MENU



EDWARD WAISNIS

Edward Waisnis is an artist and filmmaker. Additionally, he is the Producer of two Quay Brothers films, *Through the Weeping Glass* and *Unmistaken Hands*, as well as having overseen the facilitation of their 2012 MoMA retrospective. His writing has appeared in Art New England, COVER, ARTextreme and STROLL.

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