

Galerie Gisela Capitain is pleased to announce its first exhibition with the American painter Jacqueline Humphries.

The new paintings that Jacqueline Humphries has created for this exhibition oscillate in the field of tension that exists between expressive painterly gesture and technical appropriations from digital communication.

At first glance Humphries' works appear as solely abstract compositions, however, upon closer inspection one realizes that their grid-like patterns, created with the aid of templates and spread across the surface of the paintings like a net, are actually made up of formations arranged with emojis and emoticons. When the viewer approaches these images, which seem so cool and abstract from a distance, he or she is suddenly confronted with an "emotion" that puts them in the position of one being judged.

Humphries helps herself to this language, so foreign to painting and originally developed for personal use as a form of shorthand communication by text message, to create new images of an ironic type. Emojis/emoticons are standardized symbols that are supposed to express our emotions in the digital communication, and with that, simultaneously embody anonymity and intimacy. These symbols, intended for immediately expressing emotions – and for quick consumption – constantly flash across our display screens as a sign of permanent exchange. Successively evolving painting stands in strong contrast to such transient onscreen images. Humphries transfers this shorthand into artistic craft while developing a new type of painterly gesture that evades our learned viewing habits and defies established assessment matrices within the discourse of painting. By doing so, Humphries questions received notions of authentic expression in any media.

The picture surfaces are made up of several interacting layers of color, and by optically overlapping variously designed sub-surfaces Humphries creates a play of transparency, interaction, and spatial effect. The viewer is thereby enticed into physically and actively reacting to the paintings to actually grasp the works in their entirety.

For a generation shaped by changing technologies, the tiny screen of a smartphone represents a "gateway to the world." Screens dominate our everyday lives, our communication, and our sense of space, size, and time. But we experience Humphries' paintings in the real, not the virtual world, where they challenge us to actively deal with their physical presence, dimensions, color, and surface.