

Tanya Leighton

Press Release

Adrian Geller
'MEINE WELTLANDSCHAFT'

1 March – 12 April 2025

Preview: Friday 28 February, 6–8pm

Tanya Leighton, Berlin, is pleased to present 'Meine Weltlandschaft,' a solo exhibition by Normandy-based artist Adrian Geller.

Adrian Geller's paintings unfold like intricate maps – part memory, part dreamscape – where landscapes are not just places but states of being. Drawing from the Northern European tradition of *Weltlandschaft*, Geller constructs vast, all-encompassing scenes that blend meticulous observation with painterly invention. Within these painted worlds, nature is at once lush and untamed, structured yet unknowable, a space where figures appear both lost and profoundly aware. His imagined worlds and fantastical narratives allow for humour and whimsy, breaking free from conventions. This openness extends to his portrayal of the human figure, which he both embraces and questions – sometimes as an alter ego, sometimes dissolving into the landscape, blurring the boundaries between human and nature.

A central theme in Geller's work is the tension between looking outward and looking inward – between seeking meaning in objects versus confronting oneself directly. His figures often return the viewer's gaze, transforming the act of seeing into a form of reflection. The painting itself becomes a mirror, drawing us into a quiet yet unsettling confrontation with the world we inhabit. This duality is sharply rendered in *Le Trésor*, a diptych that explores our obsessive relationship with materiality and permanence. Akin to Brueghel's etching *Elck*, which illustrates the proverb that "everyone" (*elck*) searches for themselves in objects, *Le Trésor* presents a lone figure crawling into a cave, anxiously guarding his collection of treasures. Hunched on all fours, the figure is linked by a delicate golden chain to a bird – a creature that appears restrained, yet may in fact be the one holding him captive. In nature, value is ephemeral – everything grows, decays, and regenerates. But society fights against this cycle, clinging to objects in an effort to cheat time.

Geller often likens painting to gardening – a way of structuring nature, of creating meaning within chaos. This analogy runs through his landscapes, where carefully composed elements echo human attempts to tame the wild. Gardens are, in essence, controlled ecosystems, places where we dictate what grows, what is removed, and what is allowed to flourish. Similarly, painting is an act of selecting, refining, and composing, turning raw perception into something structured. Yet, within Geller's gardens, there is always an awareness of something beyond human control. In *Nature Morte*, Geller juxtaposes an espaliered apple tree – meticulously trimmed and controlled to bear sweet fruit – with a wild, painted tree rendered on a crumbling façade. The trained tree thrives under human care, yet the painted tree, despite its unruliness, persists as an enduring image. The presence of a mother and child subtly evokes the iconography of the Virgin Mary, bridging the sacred and the everyday. Just as religious imagery has long shaped how nature is perceived –

Kurfürstenstraße 156, 10785 Berlin

+49 (0)30 21 972 220, info@tanyaleighton.com, www.tanyaleighton.com

transforming landscapes into sites of devotion and symbols of the sacred – Geller’s painting questions how we mediate our relationship with the world around us. The title, meaning “still life” in French, also translates to “dead nature,” reinforcing the paradox of human creation: once nature is shaped by human hands, it loses its raw vitality but gains permanence and meaning. This tension, between life and artifice, lies at the heart of Geller’s exploration of the natural world.

This theme of containment versus resistance extends beyond nature into Geller’s depiction of human figures. In some paintings, like *La Pause*, figures are fully integrated into the environment, their presence grounding the scene in an emotional reality. In others, like *L’atelier*, the act of looking becomes central – the painter is both observer and subject, caught in the endless task of capturing what cannot be held. Geller’s meticulous handling of fabric, texture, and light recalls Flemish traditions, yet his compositions blend personal folklore with contemporary concerns. The embroidered details, elaborate draperies, and carefully rendered objects reflect a longing for permanence in a world that is inherently fleeting.

Geller’s paintings explore not just their subjects, but the act of seeing itself – how perception shapes meaning, and how the gaze becomes an active presence within the work. The figures who stare out at the viewer, the landscapes that feel both intimate and immense, the interplay between material reality and illusion – all invite the spectator to step inside, turning the canvas into a mirror of their own gaze.

Adrian Geller (born 1997, Basel) lives and works in Normandy. He studied at the Beaux-Arts de Paris.

For more information please contact info@tanyaleighton.com or telephone +49(0)30221607770.

Recent solo exhibitions include ‘APARTE’ at Super Dakota, Brussels in 2024; ‘Cloudburst’ at François Ghebaly, Los Angeles in 2023; and ‘Warping Lines’ at Capsule, Shanghai in 2021. His work has been part of group exhibitions at Perrotin, Paris; Capsule, Venice; Galerie Richard Rogers, Château La Coste; 1969 Gallery, New York; Zeyrek Çinili Hamam, Istanbul; Villa Noailles, Marseille; Beaux-Arts de Paris; and AMG Bucharest.

Geller’s work is included in the permanent collections of Yuz Museum, Shanghai; X Museum, Beijing; and Green Family Art Foundation, Dallas.