

#### 4.5.2010 Kunstraum am Schauplatz – Nestroyplatz 1020 Wien

Artists included the up-and-coming young Austrian painter Mario Neugebauer – studied with Daniel Richter, at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

Ex-‘Mercedes Body Technician’ turned painter, his large canvas motifs of speed and fast cars through heavily layered paint an energy not unlike that of the artist himself. The overt use of oil as a lacquer give his bodywork a finish redolent of glazed steel and heavy machinery, while keeping an undercurrent of sexual energy on the canvas through the fetish feel of his fast-car imagery. The paintings seem intended as a turn-on for car lovers, more than likely also to the artist himself, while gesturing towards the high-end luxury goods market.

The paintings titled ‘Autosex’ on show by Neugebauer in Kunstraum-am-Schauplatz are analogous to his previous car motifs in character – three pieces in oil, showing three similar perspectives of female genitalia (L’Origine du monde, Gustave Courbet 1866), painted with strong contrast in fine detail using thick oil and varnish, all lying across various brands of car: Ferrari/Lamborghini/Porsche – and framed separately with gold, silver and a kind of plastic yellow reminiscent of some machinist factory fluorescence.

Simultaneously celebrating the world of luxury goods combined with drugs, speed and sex, Neugebauer documents the joys and inadequacies of this lifestyle in a fashion and with an energy akin to the world of car crash maniacs depicted by David Cronenberg in his 1996 movie. His vigorous but deft use of paint with erotic overtones offset by lateral areas of primary colour leaves the viewer with an impression that these paintings have, somehow, little in common with the masculine imagery of popular car magazines, but rather suggestive of a lifestyle choice that speaks volumes of the artist.

With upcoming shows in Dubai and past exhibits in ‘Carcentre-Exhibition-Space’ in Berlin and beyond, it is likely that Neugebauer’s celebration will be seen as part of the art designer chic market, as opposed to a critique on the lifestyle itself; but gloss art it is not. Neugebauer’s emerging style is more complex than the luxury items of tasteless millionaires – his would-be patrons- and the interpretation of his fascination with his subject matter shows a wilder side to the artist than those born into the comfort and opulence that money can afford.

Given the quality of Neugebauers work however, it seems inevitable that he would dive head-first into the fast lane of the art world, where the speed of youth and exhilaration of art is clearly evident as the driving force behind his powerful paintings.

Phelim McConigly