

PRESS RELEASE**Christopher Hartmann**
In and out of touch
3 June - 31 July 2021

Christopher Hartmann's paintings present us with places in which specific time and space is suspended. They are concerned with relationships, how these are shaped by contradictory forces of alienation, intimacy and dependence, and the emotional tension this instils within each of us as we negotiate their terms. Typically presented in spaces of presumed dialogue or physical interaction, Hartmann's subjects embody the desire for an authentic connection.

We are voyeurs, looking on to this sense of unease and vulnerability, body and memory. Even as figures appear together, they also look as though they are alone; they evade eye contact, gazing past one another, cut from the frame altogether or staring straight through us. This misrecognition is central to their allusive character, an ambiguous and unresolvable tension in which conversation or a moment of exchange is anticipated but difficult to establish — when communication falls short and proximity to the other vanishes.

The eeriness and hostility of Hartman's work is symptomatic of the age we live in: an isolated, technology-driven and oversaturated world where realism has been pushed to a simulated extreme. Using layers of oil paint that mimic the masks of photo editing software, Hartmann's subjects radiate artificial tones of scarlet and yellow to evoke the luminosity of the screen, calling forth the strangely unfamiliar hue of our digital selves.

In striving to be different, we often end up being the same. Hartmann's practice is interested in portraying the complexity and contradictions of our relationships, the ways in which we discover tenderness, intimacy, communication and affection, but also the shackles of conformity, disconnection and distance we are nevertheless unable to escape. Hartmann's works are contemplative and their atmosphere is dense. His paintings explore our longing for touch and connection; at once introspective, delicate and attuned to the emotional intensities of our time.

Christopher Hartmann (b. 1993, Hassfurt, Germany) is German-Costarrican and lives and works in London. He holds an MA in Communication Design from Central Saint Martins and this summer will complete his MFA in Fine Art at Goldsmiths University London. He is a recent grantee from the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation (2020) and resident of The Fores Project London (2020). Selected exhibitions include *High Voltage*, Nassima-Landau, Tel Aviv IL (2020 - 2021); *Messe in St Agnes*, Koenig Galerie, Berlin DE (2020); *London Grads Now*, Saatchi Gallery, London UK (2020); *Tomorrow: London*, White Cube, London UK (2020); *Drawn Together*, Unit London, London UK (2020); *Crowd*, Hannah Barry Gallery, London UK (2020). Upcoming exhibitions in 2021 include Newchild Gallery, Antwerp BE; GNYP Gallery, Berlin DE; and Nassima-Landau, Tel Aviv IL.