

GREENE NAFTALI

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Katharina Wulff

It was just this moment

October 28th – December 23rd, 2016
Ground Floor

Greene Naftali is pleased to present an exhibition of work by Berlin-born, Marrakech-based painter Katharina Wulff. This will be the artist's third solo show at the gallery. With stylistic fluency that weaves a variety of art historical traditions with her own chimeric hand, Wulff creates ambiguously narrative tableaux that foreground female agency and consciousness. Wulff emerges from a generation of painters who developed a singular brand of figuration in the 1990s, including Kai Althoff and Lukas Duwenhögger.

For this exhibition, Wulff debuts a series of large-scale paintings that describe communal activity in her home of Marrakech, portraying crowded gyms and a hotel lobby. Also on view are earlier works, demonstrating Wulff's continuing engagement with figurative painting that emphasizes the female form. Women in Wulff's paintings are solid and durable in pose, acute and purposeful in expression, and centered amid detailed, labyrinthine scenes, abundant with incongruities and anachronisms. The figures of *Esther*, *Untitled*, and *der Aufbruch* (all 2012), appear as constants among variables: in the background, costumes jump from one era to another; delicate renderings seem immaterial against opaque and highly resolved areas of paint; figures are diminished or magnified more than perspective should allow. Wulff's formal irregularities manifest not only the psychological depth ascribed to her figures, but also the artist's mindful navigation of modernist tropes, deftly integrating the century's innovations in her choices of color, style, and composition.

Within Wulff's newest paintings, a dimension of social reality is explored within a long romanticized locale. Depicting the complex space of a hotel lobby from different angles, Wulff captures layers of economic and social exchange between waiters, desk clerks, and guests. Men bear more of a presence in these paintings, yet the female figure is still present, this time in an emphatic subversion of the male gaze. In a darkened hotel lobby, a woman steals a glance at an inexplicably nude male perched over a bar. In an all male gym, painted with intricate details of bulging veins and weight values inscribed in barbells, a young girl makes a peculiar appearance, leaning against a wall in her blue dress, observing the scene.

In an alcove gallery are Wulff's freestanding, aromatic Mosharabieh cedar lattice panels, which extend the Moorish decor of her paintings into literal space. Working with craftsmen in her town, Wulff created a series of architectural elements to accompany her works. Also on view are Wulff's drawings. Rendered in precise lines, some are methodical studies for the panels on view, while others geometrically map her figurative subject matter.

Katharina Wulff lives and works in Marrakech. Recent solo exhibitions include San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; Fürstenberg Zeitgenössisch, Donaueschingen, Germany; and Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin. Wulff's paintings are currently on view in the group exhibition *These Strangers ... Painting and People*, S.M.A.K, Ghent. Her work is included in the public collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; and Museum Abteiburg, Mönchengladbach, Germany.

For more information please visit www.greenenaftaligallery.com.