

Summer Exhibitions 2023

Press release, June 20, 2023

# HAUS KUNST MITTE



ROXANA HALLS

## The Eyes of Roxana Halls. New British Figurative Art

CURATOR: Dr. Anna Havemann,  
Artistic Director Haus Kunst Mitte

## To Be – Named

WITH: bellu&bellu, Angélica Chio, Zhaoyue Fan,  
Jeanno Gaussi, Tuli Mekondjo, Jenny Irene  
Miller, Nnenna Onuoha, Keith Wilson, Luz María  
Sánchez, Katharina Schnitzler, Bently Spang,  
Elizabeth Withstandley

IN COOPERATION WITH: Experimental Humanities Collaborative Network

CURATORS: Dr. Dorothea Schöne, Artistic Director Kunsthau

Dahlem & Dr. Anna Havemann, Artistic Director Haus Kunst Mitte



# July 1 – October 1, 2023

Vernissage:

Friday, June 30, 2023, 7 p.m.

Haus Kunst Mitte – House for Contemporary Art

Heidestraße 54, Berlin – Moabit

**HAUS KUNST MITTE**, a new venue for contemporary art, located between the main train station and Hamburger Bahnhof, will present two exhibitions at the same time from **July 1 to October 1, 2023**. The first institutional solo exhibition of the British figurative painter **Roxana Halls** and the group exhibition **To Be – Named** with international artists. Strong feminist reflections on the position of women in Western societies meet a sensitive, intercontinental discourse on the identity-forming significance of names.

## The Eyes of Roxana Halls. New British Figurative Art

Roxana Halls, *Laughing While Digging*, 2022,  
Oil on canvas, 183 x 183 cm,  
Courtesy of the artist  
© Roxana Halls

Roxana Halls, *Cecilia The Astonishing & Her Lovely Assistants Masculinum Femininum*, 2009,  
Oil on canvas, 157 x 152 cm,  
Courtesy of the artist  
© Roxana Halls



Wayward women full of power and charisma dominate the paintings of the British artist **Roxana Halls** (\*1974, London). Her use of colour, the emphasis on the materiality of her figures' skin, and the intense facial expressions give her works a special urgency. British humour and a fascination with film and theatre characterize Halls's subjects. Her protagonists, trapped in unreal settings that nevertheless have something recognizable about them, transcend boundaries. They are uninhibited and laugh exaggeratedly, or cast cold glances at the viewer: from within the pictorial space. Halls's new images of women subvert classic notions of gender roles, class and sexuality. The title of the exhibition, *The Eyes of Roxana Halls*, alludes to the neo-noir thriller *Eyes of Laura Mars* (1978) by Irvin Kershner. Comparable to the women in Halls's portraits, the female protagonist in the feature film also transgresses social conventions.

The exhibition at Haus Kunst Mitte is the first institutional solo show of the British artist, who explores new possibilities for figurative painting. Halls has close ties to Berlin. Since 2004, the artist has regularly visited the capital to gather inspiration. In antique stores at flea markets, she bought books, posters, theatre costumes and other props that can be found in her current work.

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# To Be – Named

Names are related to our origin and to our mother tongue. They are something very personal and at the same time political and can also be an expression of abuse of power. The group exhibition *To Be - Named* is dedicated to the topic of naming and the significance of names for the development or suppression of a person's identity. It is the first venue of an international project with exhibition stops in Athens (Greece), Mexico City (Mexico) and Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan). The core of the exhibition is formed by the works of six artists from the USA, which will be shown at all locations. These are juxtaposed with an equal number of local positions from each host country. By bringing together local and international works, the project creates a dialogue between the artists, with their different experiences and world views, and the audience. The loss of identity in the translation of names into a foreign cultural context is as much a theme of the exhibition as the efforts of indigenous cultures in North America to use names to demonstrate claims to their ancestry and ties to their territorial homeland.

**Tuli Mekondjo, Nnenna Onuoha, Angélica Chio, Jeanno Gaussi, Katharina Schnitzler** and the artist duo **bellu&bellu** complete the exhibition *To Be - Named* in Berlin. In paintings, installations, films, and photographs, they negotiate the traces of colonial history and colonial injustice that have manifested themselves over decades through naming, image appropriation, or one-sided historiography.

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## Artists:

bellu&bellu, Angélica Chio, Zhaoyue Fan,  
Jeanno Gaussi, Tuli Mekondjo, Jenny Irene Miller,  
Nnenna Onuoha, Keith Wilson, Luz María  
Sánchez, Katharina Schnitzler, Bently Spang,  
Elizabeth Withstandley

### TITLE:

Roxana Halls, *Laughing  
While Conducting – Gun*, 2020,  
Oil on canvas, 70 x 75 cm,  
Private collection © Roxana Halls

Katharina Schnitzler,  
*Farbportrait*, 2020 – 2022,  
Mixed media on canvas,  
Courtesy of the artist  
© Katharina Schnitzler

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House for Contemporary Art