

Press Release

Raoul de Keyser
Watercolours

July 4 – August 15, 2009
Opening: Friday, July 3, 6–9 pm
Gallery hours: Tuesday–Saturday 11 am–6 pm

Galerie Barbara Weiss is pleased to present a show by the internationally renowned Belgian painter Raoul de Keyser (born in 1930 in Deinze). This is our fifth collaboration with Raoul de Keyser and the first exhibition of his work in Germany to concentrate exclusively on watercolours. The exhibition presents 18 works, following on from Raoul de Keyser's *Watercolours* solo exhibition, which was recently shown at Museu Serralves in Porto and Douglas Hyde Gallery in Dublin, including a comprehensive catalogue, also entitled *Watercolours*.

Raoul de Keyser's oil paintings use a reduced formal and colour idiom and mostly show abstract views of specific places and situations, and sometimes of already existing works of art. A characteristic feature is the interrelation of autonomous amorphous and/or clearly contoured colour areas, which de Keyser applies to the canvas in masterly fashion in numerous layers. In this process figurative elements of early stages of the painting frequently recede to make way for gestural fragments and disruptions, and also for monochrome overpainting of large surfaces. De Keyser's stylistic range includes a great variety, and he frequently takes recourse to earlier images and styles, thus countering any idea of linear or one-dimensional development.

Whereas de Keyser's oil paintings are constituted by layers of divergent pictorial elements, his small-size, delicate and often intimate watercolours witness his wish to work with a minimum of control over his materials. The liquidity and transparency of the watercolour paint, which de Keyser usually applies as a wash, make it possible to experiment with various ephemeral effects. The results – like many of the artist's paintings – are gently reminiscent of landscapes, the sky, water, or bodies. These images are often close to states of dissolution, near to nothingness, whereby this adherence to a principle of absence can be startlingly moving.

Raoul de Keyser is one of the most important European painters of recent decades and has had many solo exhibitions in renowned galleries including *Portikus*, Frankfurt/Main, *Kunsthalle Bern*, *The Renaissance Society*, Chicago, *Whitechapel Gallery*, London, and *Kunstmuseum St. Gallen*. The first large German retrospective of de Keyser's work, entitled *Replay*, opens on 20 August 2009 at *Kunstmuseum Bonn*.

Barbara Buchmaier