

# HELENE APPEL

## WASHING UP

Opening Saturday 24 September 6 – 9 p.m.

25 September – 5 November 2016

P420 is pleased to present *Washing Up*, the first solo show in Italy by the German artist Helene Appel (Karlsruhe, 1976). The exhibition features all her latest paintings, made specifically for the new spaces of P420.

Appel's painting is like a tribute to the eye of the observer. As if by deception, we are seduced by the grainy canvases that depict apparently banal objects, almost borderline subjects not worthy of a surface, which when painted on raw canvas find a stage, a set of a theater of everyday revelation.

Fishing nets, rags, kitchen sink drains, sea water, slices of meat or bread... Appel's still lifes are always studied, dissected, described with a formal lucidity typical of cold hyperrealism, where states of transparency alternate with others of great density.

Appel's painting is not a matter of waste, but a gesture of conservation, faithful to one element at a time, in order not to lose the details, the nuances, the anatomy of every single formal cranny. A painting that makes gesture into a weave of dilated time, in a contemporary age that increasingly breaks away from slowness, seen almost as a defeat by capitalism. In this sense, the German artist's painting is anti-capitalist, because it lingers in a space of authentic and original reflection, hovering where the eye would otherwise skim rapidly, without interest. In the used, the banal or the simply natural, that something abandoned by attention rescues us from all the excess, all the visual pollution to which we are constantly subjected. The artist's quotidian universe seems to be purified, cleansed by the pictorial gesture whose slow pace might be seen as obsolete in the speed of the contemporary world.

The surfaces and subject/objects of Appel are present not only in the very moment of their occurrence, but also in the continuation of an instant, permanently imprinted as in a film frame.

*Washing Up* presents works that are like deposits of living matter, that wash, clean and safeguard the eye from the deception of today's chaos. The surface of things becomes the stubborn search for a constantly elusive present.

Selected solo shows: James Cohan Gallery, New York (2014) and The Approach, London (2013), also at Mönchehaus Museum Goslar in Germany (2011). Presently in progress, *I Prefer Life* at Museum Weserburg in Bremen. Appel has also shown work at the Royal Academy of Spain in Rome (2015) and Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci in Prato (2013).