

influence our essence, are addressed in *Laptop Men* (2018) – a series of minimalistic steel sculptures that represent human silhouettes in various positions, merged with their laptops. A second look is required to spot the body parts and distinguish them from the electronic devices that seem to be made of the same material. But if we are able to see it, it might mean we still have some chance to save ourselves before the mutation is complete.

11 MONIKA BAER  
Die Einholung

Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin  
By Aaron Bogart

In *Bluets*, her ode to the color blue, Maggie Nelson writes: “And so I fell in love with a color – in this case, the color blue – as if falling under a spell, a spell I fought to stay under and get out from under, in turns.” The contradictions of falling in love – with a color, with a person – is what came to mind after seeing a beguiling suite of new yellow paintings by Monika Baer in her stellar exhibition “Die Einholung.”

All six of the yellow-hued acrylic, pigment, and quartz paintings on canvas are untitled (all 2017-18) and range from portrait-size to life-size. Five of the paintings were arranged along one wall, allowing subtle differences in tone to be seen: one was a sun-faded yellow, like the old stucco of buildings in Berlin, while others were slightly more vibrant, like a freshly bloomed flower. The paint is spread evenly across the canvas, except for a few places where it is built up into thick, impasto-like applications. These moments of interruption to the generally calm yellow plane draw you in to inspect the slight furrows and wrinkles in the painting’s sensuous surface – like Thomas examining Christ’s wound. Perhaps the most curious thing about these works is that they all have “security devices” – to use Baer’s words – attaching the paintings to the walls. The small metal L-brackets and thin wire used to anchor the sides of the canvas to the wall are humorous because they clearly wouldn’t be up to deterring a real thief, but they are also touching – as if the artist isn’t quite ready to let the paintings go.

But there are other absorbing works in this show too, such as a series of five drawings based on objects Baer saw while traveling. *Die Einholung* (2017), for example, is a sketch on light blue paper of a hand holding a bishop’s hat that was modeled on a wooden sculpture of Saint Denis found in Cologne. The title translates to “the request”; of what we don’t know, but give the works in this exhibition just a moment of time and you’ll fall under their spell.



10 Judith Hopf, “OUT,” installation view at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 2018. Photography by Frank Sperling.

11 Monika Baer, *Untitled*, 2018. Pigment, oil on canvas, aluminum, screws. 51x45cm. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin.

12 Stanley Whitney, “Paintings,” installation view at Galerie Nordenhake, Berlin, 2018. Photography by Gerhard Kassner. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nordenhake, Berlin / Stockholm.



12 STANLEY WHITNEY  
Paintings

Galerie Nordenhake, Berlin  
By William Kherbek

In a series of experiments conducted in the 1660s, Isaac Newton set out to investigate the chromatic constitution of light. Using sequentially placed prisms, Newton demonstrated that white light’s division into the rainbow spectrum provides an endpoint: the colors of the spectrum did not contain a deeper spectrum, and, thus, for science, the matter was settled. One discourse’s endpoint is often the originary point of another, and the exhibition of Stanley Whitney’s works at Galerie Nordenhake provides a glimpse of how an artist, not content with mere reality, creates an alternative set of possibilities.

Whitney’s works build on the principles of the period of high abstraction during which he came of age, but move forward on their own terms. “Movement” does appear to be an appropriate word to use for Whitney’s canvases; in paintings like *Here Comes the Sun* (2016), the explicit reference to the Beatles song evokes the cyclical and rhythmicity of pop music, but Whitney’s work resists the neatness of George Harrison’s lyrical bromides. Colors bleed over and beneath strips of turquoise and orange – they are in motion, but their progress is not necessarily continuous or clear-cut. Like Newton, Whitney is interested in the notion of color as a space, a site containing other potentially hidden elements. Speaking to Lowery Stokes Sims, the erstwhile director of Harlem’s Studio Museum, Whitney emphasized that, in his work, “the space is in the color.” Unlike the scientist, however, Whitney is capable of detecting infinite emotional spectra within – as much as between – colors. *Light a New Wilderness* (2016), for example, provides the viewer with quadrilaterals of green and blue that invite her to look behind and, indeed, though the pigment. There is a light beneath and, of course, within the colors, but is it a light of progress? A light in a wilderness is a much more unresolved

and ambiguous proposition than a light in a tunnel. It is this capacity to see the unsettled qualities of colors as they overlap, brilliant and unsettling in equal measure – as in *Early Bird* (2016), which is infused with a bony whiteness that by turns illuminates and disturbs – that makes Whitney’s work so well suited to the present moment. Contra Newton, a color is never finally, simply, a color; it also bears a narrative of its own. What appears clear at first glance may belie depths that no science can plumb.

13 ALFREDO VOLPI  
La poétique de la couleur

NMNM, Monaco  
By Nathaniel Wolfson

Volpi may be one of Brazil’s artistic giants, but he is still little known internationally. “Alfredo Volpi. La poétique de la couleur,” the first solo exhibition dedicated to the artist in a museum outside of Brazil, wants to help correct this. The show aims to present a sense of Volpi’s complete works in order to highlight his various periods. It begins with Volpi’s transition from a kind of Impressionism in the 1940s to his investigations of color and volume during the following decade. The beginning of Volpi’s career involved translating the motifs of his earlier landscapes of São Paulo’s suburbs into geometric forms flattened onto two-dimensional compositions: weather vanes into triangles, cupulas into circles, and festival flags known as *bandeirinhas* into rectangles.

The felicitous title of the exhibition recalls Mário Pedrosa’s seminal catalogue essay from 1957 (for a solo exhibition by Volpi at the Museo de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro), in which the critic described Volpi’s uses of color as a kind of “personal lyricism.” If Volpi’s “lyrical” imagination developed over decades of work as a painter of interior walls, ceramic tiles, and eventually canvases, color became the “speaker” of what might be understood as a serial poetic production. Whether Volpi’s work articulates a theme is a question worth asking. One possible answer is that the theme is presence itself, against the backdrop of postwar heroic narratives of speed and national progress. One of the show’s rooms containing works from the 1960s stages the constancy of architectonic figures such as facades, doors, and archways opening onto flattened supports. In two paintings, green and blue doors and archways open onto similarly colored supports (both *Untitled*, 1960s). For Roman Jakobson (who visited Volpi at his workshop in the 1960s), poetry achieves its “function” by projecting the axis of metaphor onto the axis of metonymy. The figure of a