

## SILVAN LIONNI – SWEET`N LOW

14 March 2015 – 25 April 2015

taubert contemporary is pleased to present the first solo exhibition in Germany by Sylvan Lionni.

For his own work, Sylvan Lionni regards abstraction as an impossible solution since, as he claims, no rational decision on each possible variation is available to him. The overall superiority of painting plays a crucial role to him. At the same time, it is nowadays characterised by its technical freedom, since dripping, scraping and printing techniques need not be explained, and the painting has long since been freed from its rectangular stretcher frame. His apparent solution is representational painting. In some of the paintings, the object can almost be seen as a ready-made. In other works, the model remains hidden by the choice of the selected section. His supposedly rational way is by no means objective. The alienation alone, through the redemption of the object, is deeply subjective. Lionni's always technically precisely converted images might be interpreted in the tradition of pop art as the staging of consumer culture or because of their minimalist appearance as a conscious quote from recent art history. Perhaps this is all true, but the result of the labour is also completely free, because he succeeds in finding an abstract detachment. Thus, his paintings morph into meditative tableaux. Lionni the painter carves out the important questions of concrete or abstract. But the viewer receives no answer – only a mere guidance for reflection.

The exhibition shows works from the current series of the Ruler Paintings, the Dust Paintings and the Cake Boxes. The Ruler Paintings are particularly representative examples of Lionni's entire previous oeuvre. This is not a continuation of a simple geometrical abstraction. Rather, Sylvan Lionni deliberately quotes the history of art and uses supposed objets trouvés in the composition of the image. The Dust Paintings show touches of fingers or hands, evidence such as streaks or scratches. Lionni's basic motivation behind this can be described as a conceptually planned form of abstract expressionism. Some of the Cake Boxes are called Totem, highlighting what they are about for the artist. The title stands for the symbol in the sense of a mundane metaphor or a sacred symbol. And the models for this group of works are indeed mundane, yet the eye is guided over the monochrome colour through edges and cuts. Shadows lend variation to the surface. The desire for haptic experience replaces the metaphor.

Ascan Iredi, March 2015

*Sylvan Lionni, born 1973 in Chuckfield, UK.  
He lives and works in Eugene, Oregon, USA.*