

The title of Daniel Karrer's third solo exhibition at Tony Wuethrich is as simple as it is complex. Among other, Re:Re:Re: refers in particular to the reciprocal nature of painting – as a permanent process of reinvention (restart), looking back (rewind), and responding to what has already been created. Each painting is always a reaction to another.

A central element in Karrer's work is the technique of reverse glass painting, which he has been practicing since 2016. Unlike the German term *Hinterglasmalerei*, the English expression describes the process more precisely: the painting is done invertedly on the back of the glass – from front to back, from detail to background. Controlling the image requires constant turning, structure and brushstrokes become flattened – the image carrier is simultaneously surface, display, and a space for creating distance. At the same time, the glass gives the paint a luminous, shiny quality.

The “reversed” pictorial logic opens up additional levels of meaning and possibilities for an artist who grew up with digital media. The constant shift between analog and digital painting allows for hybrid approaches to an image: motivic strands between abstract and figurative are developed in parallel. The motifs mostly originate from the Internet, they are fragmented, rendered and collaged in Photoshop, and transferred back into painting on glass (going back and forth several times). Especially in the new works from 2024 to 2025, however, the process is often reversed: abstract painting on glass forms the starting point for further (digital and analog) editing processes with open outcome.

Digital tools such as the “Undo” command (Apple-Z) or the eraser are simulated analogously by removing or shifting layers of paint with a palette knife. In this way, digital aesthetics and manual painterly gestures confront each other, while flaking acrylic paint or the addition of instant coffee artificially create impressions of decay processes such as erosion or corrosion.

The paintings oscillate between figuration and abstraction, between gestural and meticulous painting. Quotations of individual motifs or entire genres from art history –pastoral landscapes, tree and cloud motifs, piles, islands, mountains – refer to Monet, Böcklin, or Hokusai, while recurring comic-like elements – shoes, mustaches, pairs of eyes – are reminiscent of Philip Guston. Gestural overpaintings or grid structures create further “image disturbances.”

A recurring motif is the fragment of a stylized grassy landscape in which four paws and the hind legs of a horse evoke Saint George as the dragon slayer – a motif popular in traditional reverse glass painting as a kind of template is quoted here and at the same time “erased” by abstract painting. The brushstroke becomes its own subject – very much in the spirit of De Kooning, Lichtenstein, or Richter.

In some places, abrasions create “real” windows in the picture – or they appear as illusionistic image quotations in trompe-l'œil technique. Karrer takes up Leon Battista Alberti's idea of the image as an “open window to the world” – and directs it toward painting itself. The work weaves together digital and analog spheres, figuration and abstraction, art-historical references and media reflection into a complex, self-referential system: Re:Re:Re: Painting *mise en abyme*.

Eva Scharrer, Juli 2025