

**25 May - 30 June 2023**

**Opening reception for the artist: Thursday 25 May, 5-7pm**

**Bernard Lokai**

**24.2.22**

When German painter Bernard Lokai saw images of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, he was immediately transported to memories of his family's escape from Czechoslovakia in the 1960s. He responded with a series of abstract, deeply felt paintings that explore the connections between his own past and the immediacy and emotion of global political events.

Lokai's work uses the historical vernacular of painting – including the active brushstrokes of Abstract Expressionism and the spray paint of graffiti – to simultaneously absorb and disrupt traditions of landscape and abstraction. In this new body of work, Lokai addresses his own refugee experience with bold, gestural marks and strategically positioned negative space. Often combining multiple techniques within a single work and leaving portions of the canvas raw around the movement and impact of the central forms, Lokai uses every tool at his disposal, from sprayed neon acrylics to thickly applied brushstrokes in oil.

Lokai's new work expresses a direct emotion around a particular event, and deviates from earlier, more studied paintings "about painting." While his practice ceaselessly probes the traditions and tropes of the genre, these new compositions bring the history and legacy of painting into an urgent present.

Bernard Lokai was born in 1960 in Bohumin, Czechoslovakia. After his family escaped from the former Czechoslovakia, Lokai grew up in Duren, Germany. He studied at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf under Gerhard Richter and now resides in Düsseldorf and Berlin.