

# GALERIE MARIA BERNHEIM

TOM WARING

## *A Robot Never Made Me Laugh*

Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zürich  
September 1 - October 27, 2023

Galerie Maria Bernheim is proud to present Tom Waring's first solo show with the gallery and in Switzerland. Entitled *A Robot Never Made Me Laugh*, the exhibition draws upon his traditional surrealist and incongruous motifs on an unparalleled scale.

Waring's paintings are based on intricate compositions, meticulously built with art historical references ranging from gothic mythologies to impossible architecture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His oeuvre relies not only on the skillful rendering of these elements, but also on the Musée Imaginaire of the viewer, where those references suddenly take on a life of their own, their post Dada association forcing us to imagine a world seldom theirs. It is precisely this in between moment, this subconscious passage way that the exhibition points to, this place that Waring creates through receding planes, multiple panels connected like altar pieces, through giant objects and architectural elements crammed into the smallest squares, questioning the very core of how we think but also how we envisage space. As the artist notes, our cognitive ability to transcend data and make leaps, when for instance combing images, or viewing an image in a different context is what makes us human. In our holistic human perception, we are able to make this jump through the things and derive more of each of them. Humor is a great example of this transversal cognitive act and the title of the exhibition refers to a written sign a screenwriter was holding in a strike in Hollywood over the impact of AI on their livelihoods.

Reflecting upon this semiotic issue, the artist explores the ancestral motif of the chair, recurring in multiple paintings, they become an anchor, an instantly recognizable element that throws off the viewer as an absurd and surrealist image around which the work is centered. Recently, the notion of chair has been used in robot development and artificial recognition to test whether recognition had been achieved or not by a robot: the result is that its concept has been very difficult to formulate into a robot's programming.

How do you differentiate between anything else with a flat top and 4 legs? Is a chair a table or a turtle?

In this De Chiricoesque atmosphere, paint is not only imaginary, the uncanny lingers, gargoyles hide under chairs, stairs lead to nowhere and we are left with a sense of uneasiness that surpasses the beauty of the craft.

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Tom Waring was born in 1991 in Reading, United Kingdom. Waring lives and works in London. He holds a BA in Fine Art from Aberystwyth University, School of Art and an MFA in Fine Art from UAL Wimbledon College of Art. He has received numerous awards for his artistic achievements throughout his career: The Aiden Threlfall Award, The Hackney Family Scholarship, and the Vice Chancellors Scholarship UAL. He has been included in numerous solo and group exhibitions including Downs&Ross Gallery, NYC, The Margulies Collection, and the South London Gallery.

*A Robot Never Made Me Laugh* will be on view at Rämistrasse 31 in Zürich from September 1 to October 27, 2023, Wednesday to Saturday 12PM - 5PM. For additional information, please contact the gallery at +41 (0)79 700 7928 or [info@mariabernheim.com](mailto:info@mariabernheim.com).