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S U S  
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A **S T**  
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S S A  
D E N



Fassade I  
2013  
acrylic on canvas  
100 × 200 cm



Fassade V  
2015  
acrylic on canvas  
80 × 80 cm



Fassade VIII  
2015  
acrylic on canvas  
125 × 90 cm





Fassade IX  
2016  
acrylic on canvas  
90 × 120 cm





Fassade X  
2016  
acrylic on canvas  
160 × 120 cm



Fassade XIII  
2016  
acrylic on canvas  
100 × 100 cm



A night scene with the interior lit up by intensive, bluish light of fluorescent lamps, virtual blackness descending on a simple façade, its large windows wearing golden-like frames; within the range of this shot, like that taken from science-fiction films, there are perfectly round drums of washers standing in a row, rising upwards. And a man spotted somewhere between the night and the laboratory whiteness, devoted to his own rituals that have so little to do with what surrounds him; a crouched figure of a sitting boy, his gaze probably fixed on his smartphone; and nearby a couple, a man and a woman, finally falling into the raptures of love, anonymous, separated with a window pane from the prying eyes of passers-by. Their whispers, their effusions melt into the monotonous wheezing of the washer. They are present, but as if they were not there, they are not foreground figures and not even background ones – they are an immanent part of this city that washes its dirty laundry, deprived of autonomy, passively moved by the cogs of their daily ritual.

Susanna Storch drew attention to this place in her native city Mainz, and painted “Fassade X” in 2016. The painting is different than others, based on the daringly marked slanted perspective and strong contrasts of light and shade. One could say that compared with other simplistic, Bauhaus-like paintings, this one is nearly baroque. This is why it was selected as a lead painting for Susanna Storch’s exhibition, which we present as part of Cracow Gallery Week 2019.

Susanna Storch is an artist who is engaged in an incessant dialogue with the world that surrounds her, but first of all her painting intuition is directed towards men, with their flawed predicament in the world, who fall under the weight of wars and then rise from the fall but not higher than to the level of banal existence. And in Storch’s world there are no surges or delights; her men – trampled with the army boot into desert sand, rolled over by wars, those in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the nightmares of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo, which she had intensively depicted in her early “Gegen Krieg” (Against War) painting cycle – now return to their flats, the safe shelters, separated from the world with a win-

# SUSANNA STORCH'S PAINTINGS

dow pane, with a curtain, with the line of dried washing in the windows.

The titles of the paintings do not betray anything apart from the planned sequence of their appearance. We do not receive any information from the artist concerning where, in what part of the world or Europe, an interesting motive draws her attention. The represented figures and their home surroundings carry hardly any information about their cultural or religious background. People from Susanna’s paintings are all the same, just like the architecture of their houses, equally bland, regardless whether they live in Paris, London, Lisbon, Frankfurt or Mainz, or even in Santiago de Chile.

The first painting of Susanna Storch from the “Fassaden” series was inspired by the observations she had made in Paris in 2013. It is a strongly elongated canvas, monumental in its size (100 × 200 cm), where she first attempted to meet such a clearly specified aim – to depict the “heroism of daily life”, as Le Corbusier had put it, synchronising impersonality and individualism, permanence and coincidence. Maybe it was not a coincidence

that the great architect wrote this about the city: “Life is rough and active here, Paris at every moment works like a swing of a whip – it is death to dreamers”. Through the window of his Paris apartment the artist can see a bland wall of a typical block of flats, modular wall cladding, modular sliding windows. The fifth or tenth floor, on the left or on the right – it does not matter. Through drawn drapes, lace curtains, blinds one can see elements of the interiors: a table, a glass, shelves, maybe the washing in the basket, maybe the sink? A man wearing just his underwear is eating something, and will soon reach for a glass, his nakedness not embarrassing him. He is alone, unaware that the artist is looking at him, maybe he had grown indifferent to the look of all those who, like him in the block of flats opposite, live the lives indifferent to glances, filled with daily routine. The composition and colour scheme of the painting resemble those of Bauhaus projects, with dominating greyness into which the blue and greyish red are introduced via rectangular partitions marked by light-coloured lines. Purely geometric lines are complemented by wavy, irregular, soft lines. Standardized façades, where glass and wall are re-



Cracow based motif for  
Fassade XXIII  
taken in December '18

duced to one plane, enter into dialogue with modestly personalized interiors where the gesture of a human being creating his own space is maximally restricted.

Paintings of Susanna Storch are composed on the basis of photographic studies she makes. The motives that are recorded in this way undergo a pragmatic reconstruction: from the faithful reflections of reality they are turned into artworks. The paintings are saturated with painful void, as Amédée Ozefant understood the concepts. Metaphysics is missing in the life of Susanna Storch. Her human figure seems to be not so much a particle of the universe, but rather a part of a modern “machine for living in”. It lives the present day and constitutes part of the total system, with no need for a brilliant backdrop, without unnecessary fetishes – ornament-free.

And it is what is ordinary and daily, what is a routine and not an anxiety-provoking exception that moves us as viewers who stand in front of the artist’s paintings.

Although the unfinished painting “Fassade XXII” is still standing on the easels in Storch’s study, another façade will be her memory brought back

from Kraków in December 2018. Whether it will be the orange “Scena54” neon light with the shabby streetlamp attached to the peeling façade of the former Tobacco Factory, or perhaps the simple, horizontal series of windows at Lipowa 4c, next to Oscar Schindler Museum, or maybe the somewhat different, more sentimental, nostalgic mirror nailed to a grey wall and shrouded with dry vine shoots – preparing the catalogue for publication we still do not know which motive from our city will be incorporated into Susanna Storch’s “Fassaden” series.

The artist positions her own art within the school of Figurative Realism, where the human being is the central theme. We can only add that, particularly in the “Fassaden” series, Storch’s human characters are subject to pressures with which they have to struggle in order to save their own selves, their individualism, the meaning of their lives.

Zofia Weiss  
President of Wojciech Weiss Museum Foundation  
Kraków, March 2019



**Zofia Weiss: Susanna, your exhibition takes place as part of the Cracow Gallery Week. For the first time this year, the formula of the event has been expanded from Cracow Gallery Weekend. Have you heard about this tradition in Poland? Do you also have such festivals in Germany?**

**Susanna Storch:** Last December, I visited Cracow for the first time ever and I didn't know much about the Cracow art life and events – I only heard of the vivid art scene in this town from my friend, the photographer Katharina Dubno, who had exhibited at the Zofia Weiss Gallery with the group Sputnik Photo last year. In Frankfurt, we have a similar event like a Gallery Weekend every September, it's called "Season Start of Frankfurt Galleries". There are only galleries opening that weekend, not the museums and other institutions. The Berlin Art Week is a real big festival, compared to Frankfurt: it's a five days art happening with two international art fairs, exhibitions in museums, institutions and private galleries. I visit this event regularly, also took part in one of the art fairs twice. I'm looking forward to be part of the Cracow Art Week and to have the possibility to see what will be presented in the different places.

**Z.W. Why you chose Kraków and my gallery?**

**S.S.** Katharina told me about the beautiful town, the many interesting places to visit and the high quality program of the Zofia Weiss Gallery, so I decided to send my catalogues and apply for an exhibition. When I received the positive feedback, I booked a flight for the opening of the "8 Women" exhibition in December 2018, to get in contact and to see the gallery and the town.

**Z.W. What were your impressions from this visit and from Cracow artistic life, and also from the vernissage of our exhibition dedicated to the 100th anniversary of women's admission to the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków?**

**S.S.** I flew to Cracow a day before the Opening; my friend Sabine Mamat, a graphic designer from Hamburg, also came over to discover the town with me. We were really impressed by the inspiring beauty of this old town, by the friendliness of the people and the charming atmosphere of the Christmas market we dropped in the first evening. The Opening in Your Gallery was a real big event, with a great public and very high quality artworks. We also went to the exhibition at the Academy of Fine Arts where we had some interesting conversations with participating students. I especially remember a kind of satirical drawing which showed the nine male professors of the Academy, titled "100 lat kobiet" (100 years of Women). The next day, we also walked to the quarter

Kazimierz, which we found even more lovable, atmospheric and interesting than the center of Cracow, though the sad and cruel history of this area is perceptible. We also went to the MOCaK Museum, a wonderful and inspiring place to discover. We were impressed by the current exhibition of the artist couple Muntean/Rosenblum, especially by their installation with the small notes of comments.

**Z.W. Today we present your exhibition entitled FASSADEN. Why did you choose this theme for your paintings?**

**S.S.** I have been working for many years in the genre of „Figurative Realism“. Focused on the human being, I have been consistently developing this big theme in several series of paintings. "Portraits", human body and its movements in the series "Nude" and "Menschenbilder/Ballet", man and nature in the Landscapes and man and war in the "Against War" paintings. The series FASSADEN focuses on the presentation of randomly observed everyday life in an urban context. Window scenes, first photographically captured in passing, throw a glimpse into the lives of the anonymous inhabitants, on the border between private and public space. Though some of the paintings don't show any persons, still the stories behind these scenes are left to the imagination of the viewer.

**Z.W. As you said, the FASSADEN series shows the lives of ordinary people living in their apartments, their daily rituals, by which we are hurriedly passing the street and we do not notice them... Do you want to make us aware of it?**

**S.S.** My first motifs for this series I found in Paris, staying in a skyscraper hotel near the Eiffel Tower, where I randomly observed the surrounding buildings and noticed the people in their windows, busy with everyday activities like watering flowers, drinking coffee or just looking out of the window. These scenes attracted and inspired me with their ordinariness and simple beauty. For me, it is not a voyeuristic look at the "human drama", at the everyday life in anonymous cities, it's more an empathic and sincere one. This was the start of the series, in the following time, I became focused on facades and window scenes, wherever I walked through urban surroundings. I found the next motifs in Santiago de Chile, in London, in my hometown, Mainz. Meanwhile, I made 22 paintings related to this topic, I chose some more subjects from Chile, also from Lisbon, Gibraltar and Prague, places I travelled to in recent years.

**Z.W. From the first moment when I saw your paintings, I associated them with Bauhaus, Le Corbusier and the ideas of the so-called "heroic period". A human was**



Susanna Storch with her painting in the background, 2017, foto by Max Becker

**to become a part of this system, surrender to what surrounds him, unficated, his individuality becoming exposed to self-destruction...**

**S.S.** Yes, of course, it's a manifest association and at the same time your own view of my works, and I agree partly with it – some of the Fassaden do show the solitary and social isolation of inhabitants of modern cities, the colours, kept in grey, bring this aspect out too. But the paintings have also other aspects for me. Just one example: The laundry, Fassade X – I was really touched by the scene with the two elderly people kissing passionately in the window, without taking care of the public. As I said, these scenes attract and inspire me with their simple beauty and prosaicness. Frank Schablewski wrote in my catalogue: "Susanna Storch paints the accessible, the world of the city. The unambiguous clarity and simplicity of the paintings brings the artist close to the inner values of people and their things."

**Z.W. I see it a little bit differently in my critical text. In your world "a human figure seems to be not so much a particle of the universe, but rather a part of a modern 'machine for living in'. It lives the present day and constitutes part of the total system, with**

**no need for a brilliant backdrop, without unnecessary fetishes – ornament-free". And I also wrote that "there are no surges or delights" in your paintings, while your attitude to all this is more positive...**

**S.S.** Yes, that is true, the only thing in your text which I do not agree with is your opinion concerning the absence of the positive or delight in my entire work – I don't feel or see it like this. Of course, there's nothing favourable or positive in the "Against War" series, as the paintings show the barbarity and cruelty of war relentlessly. But in the FASSADEN series, it's more an empathic sight on the human being, mostly I don't focus on the sad aspects of the urban life, like solitariness – although it's part of the story the paintings tell. And this is another quotation of Frank Schablewski I like: "In this series of pictures she makes an organic connection between life and art. She gets as close as she can to the people, achieving a transcendental objectivity that confirms a deep love of humanity." However, you as a beholder have your own opinion and impression of my works – that's understandable, that is interesting! I was just a bit irritated of the absoluteness of your statement...



Susanna Storch in her studio in Mainz, 2017, foto by Katharina Dubno

## susanna storch

1980 / 81 graphical design | university for applied arts münchen  
 1981 / 86 fine arts | academy of arts mainz  
 1986 / 97 ceramic design & custom built furniture  
 since '98 working solely as a freelance painter with studio in mainz

### exhibitions (selection):

gallery valentien | stuttgart | 2001  
 villa haar im goethepark | weimar | solo exhibition | 2003  
 tuchfabrik | trier | solo exhibition | 2003  
 gallery mühlfeld & stohrer | frankfurt | solo exhibition | 2004  
 portraits | bonn-bad godesberg | 2004  
 landtag rheinland-pfalz | mainz | 2005  
 gallery mühlfeld & stohrer | frankfurt | solo exhibition | 2005  
 hinsehen – standpunkte zum thema menschenrechte | göttingen | 2007  
 flutlicht | essenheimer kunstverein | altes rathaus ingelheim | 2007  
 gallery mühlfeld & stohrer | frankfurt | solo exhibition | 2007  
 human disaster | gallery förster | berlin | solo exhibition | 2008  
 menschenbilder | municipal gallery schlangenbad | solo exhibition | 2008  
 susanna storch | kunstverein paderborn | solo exhibition | 2008  
 choreographie & typographie | davisklemmgallery | frankfurt | 2008  
 wagnis wirklichkeit | gallery epikur | wuppertal | 2009  
 moments | state theatre mainz | solo exhibition | 2009  
 menschenbilder | gallery förster | berlin | solo exhibition | 2010  
 galeria le5venice | teatro la fenice | venedig | solo exhibition | 2010  
 gallery needien | neede | niederlande | 2010  
 new works | bestregarts | frankfurt | 2011  
 friedenspreis | stift klosterneuburg | austria | 2011  
 summer show | bestregarts | frankfurt | 2012  
 frauenbilder | thalhaus gallery | wiesbaden | solo exhibition | 2012  
 frauen – liebe und leben | lehmbruckmuseum | duisburg | 2013  
 herbstshow 2013 | bestregarts | frankfurt | 2013  
 im fluss | kunstverein mittelhessen | landtag mainz | 2013  
 köpfe 3 | werkkunstgalerie | berlin | 2014  
 moments | greskewitz kleinitz gallery | hamburg | 2015  
 weibsbilder | gallery klose | essen | 2015  
 fassaden | bestregarts | frankfurt | 2015  
 sightzeichen 15 | gallery klose | essen | 2015  
 faces behind art | gallery klose | essen | 2015  
 arte laguna prize exhibition | arsénale | venice | 2016  
 moments – susanna storch | artreflex gallery | sankt petersburg | solo exhibition | 2016  
 susanna storch – painting | kulturforum | flörsheim am main | solo exhibition | 2016  
 human nature | kunstverein dahn | 2017  
 sightzeichen 17 | gallery klose | essen | 2017  
 stadt-land-fluss – KM 570 | museum boppard | 2018  
 habitat | villa streccius | landau | 2018  
 markova-peychinow-storch | galerie barbara von stchow | Frankfurt | 2019

### artfairs:

artfair cologne | 2004–2007  
 art frankfurt | 2005  
 kunst köln | 2006  
 cologne fine art | 2006  
 art karlsruhe | 2007 / 2009  
 berliner liste | 2014 / 2015  
 art helsinki | 2016  
 köln list 2018

### works in public property / museums:

museum am dom | würzburg  
 museum burgmiltenberg | miltenberg  
 ministry for science, research and culture | mainz

[www.susannastorch.de](http://www.susannastorch.de)





Fassade XVII  
2017  
acrylic on canvas  
80 × 80 cm



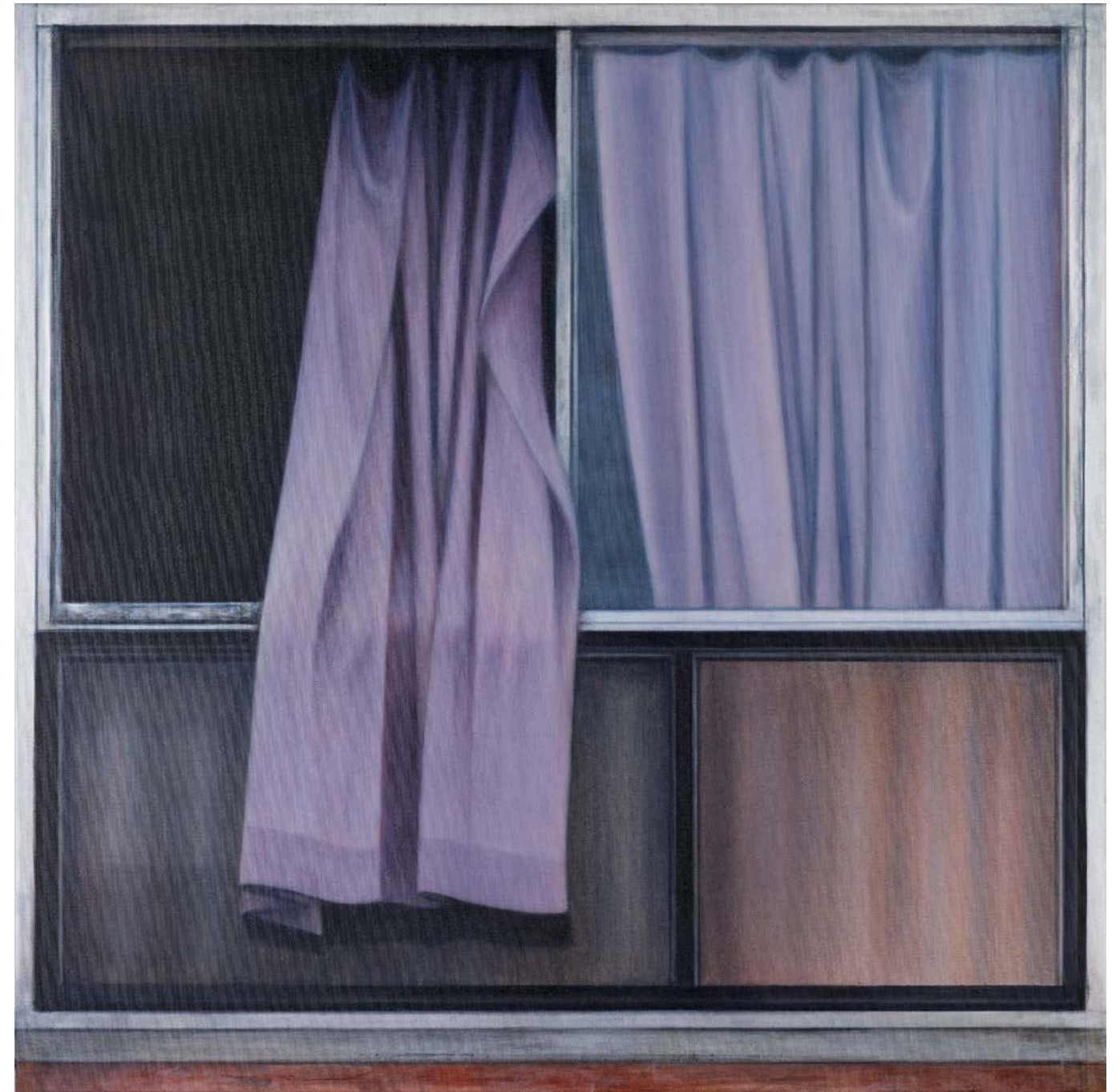
Fassade XVI  
2018  
acrylic on canvas  
100 × 200 cm



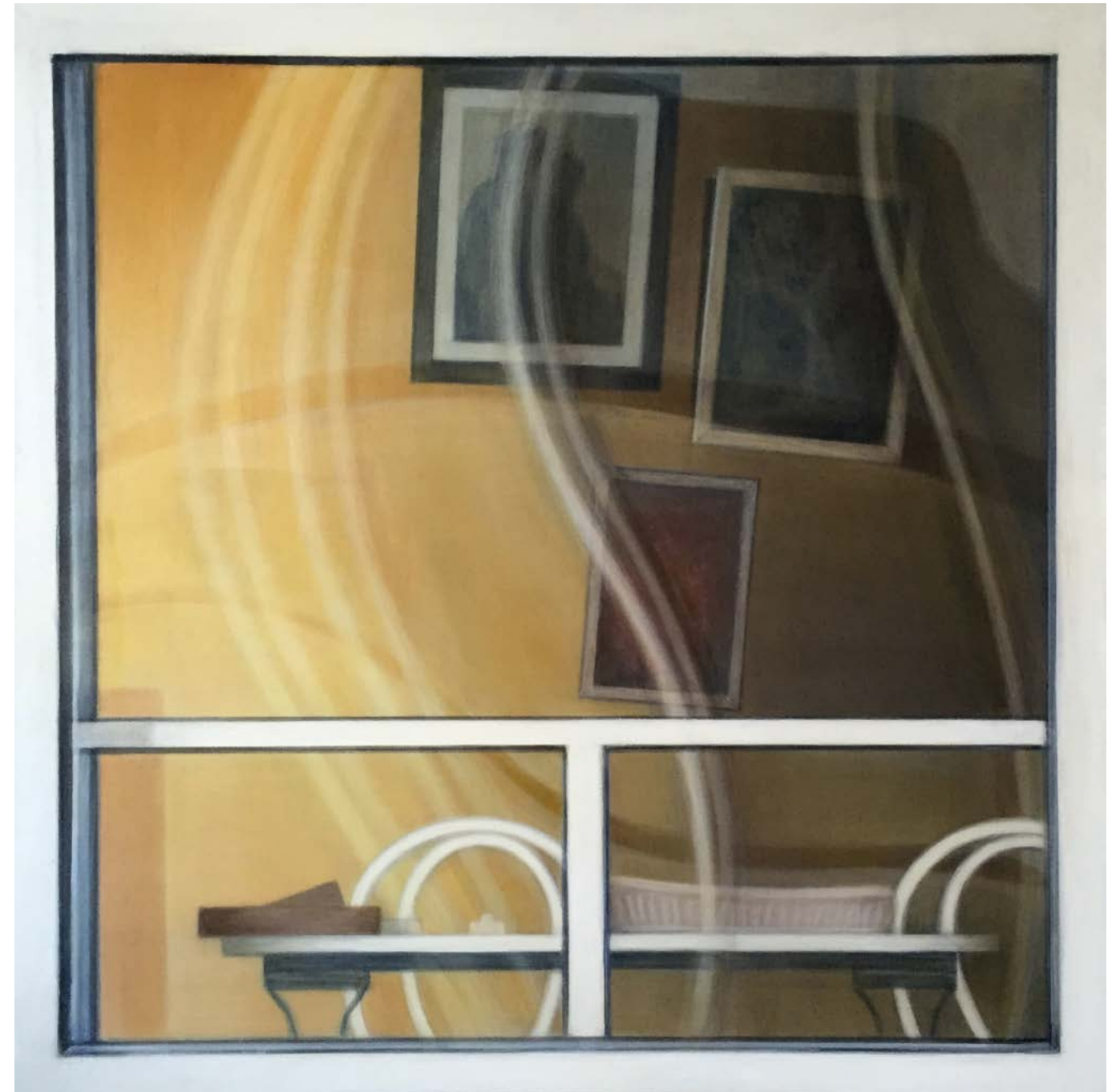


Fassade XVIII  
2018  
acrylic on canvas  
130 × 100 cm





Fassade XIX  
2018  
acrylic on canvas  
100 × 100 cm



Fassade XXI  
2019  
acrylic on canvas  
80 x 80 cm



Fassade XXII  
2019  
acrylic on canvas  
120 × 160 cm





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