YLVA CARLGREN

Angle of Incidence

15 October - 21 November 2026
Preview 15 October 6 – 8 pm.

With Angle of Incidence, Galerie Leu presents the second solo exhibition by Swedish artist Ylva Carlgren in Munich. Following Light Implies Shadows in 2023, the exhibition continues Carlgren's sustained exploration of light, perception, and the material possibilities of watercolor painting, while marking a further development of her distinctive visual language.

Those new to the work of Ylva Carlgren may be tempted to latch on to any hint of an object they believe themselves to recognise in the paintings constituting Angle of Incidence. (Is that the faint outline of a window? Are those fluorescent lamps I see?) Rather than subtle intimations intentionally left by the artist, however, these whispers of familiarity are better understood as figments of the viewer's own imagination – a buoyancy vest fashioned by the mind to steady them as they venture into the depths within the frame. While the prisms of light confronting us undeniably give form to a space to be explored, it is one which is entirely devoid of objectivity. Yet somehow, almost like magic, it comes anyway saturated with texture and depth.

This liminal space will be instantly recognisable to anyone already familiar with Carlgren's practice. But the calculated changes and considered innovations she has made to the internal economy of her own artistic idiom have succeeded in introducing a sense of movement which was previously absent. Despite being entirely static, these images are pulsating with the kind of energy that should be impossible given the artist's chosen medium.

The rapidly repeated parallel lines grant structure to a plane that hovers indeterminately – at once both beyond and behind the physical surface bearing it. The very impossibility of

this suspended state brings with it a feeling of what can only be described as kinetic agitation. A sense of vibration that acts to disrupt the calmer and more meditative atmosphere one associates with Carlgren's earlier works.

But this activity, perceived by the eye and felt with the body, can be occurring nowhere else than in the light as it reflects from a translucent material arduously applied to the inert surface of the paper. It is as if the conscientious and precise movements of the artist's hand are somehow transported directly into the pictorial realm through the time-intensive process of layering that has brought it to life. In an age of fast images and "content", Ylva Carlgren's paintings are a welcome reminder of the ineluctable mysteries of human industriousness and creativity.

(Nicholas Lawrence)