

CRISTIN TIERNEY



ARTISHOCK
— REVISTA DE ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO —

By: Artshock • 02.01.2021



Claudia Bitrán, *Everything that is speaking*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 25.5 x 28 cm. Courtesy: Walter Storms Gallery
News

CLAUDIA BITRAN: BE DRUNK

In her first individual exhibition in Europe, the multimedia artist **Claudia Bitrán** (Chile, 1986 – lives and works in New York) presents her latest series of works at the German gallery **Walter Storms**, under the title *Be Drunk*, based on the poem by Charles Baudelaire. The exhibition is made up of a set of small-format paintings and a video clip that build bridges between publications on social networks, classical painting, new media, cyber-bullying and youthful ecstasy.

CRISTIN TIERNEY

Following her methodology of painting and photographing in equal parts, as observed in her two most recent exhibitions *Frenzy* (2020) and *Fallen* (2021), the artist begins with a scene painted on canvas, photographs this finished stage, and then goes back to painting. She does it over and over until she completes the painting. Each of the photos, when superimposed as in the storyboards of animated comics, become a moving video clip. Bitrán calls this process “Stop-Motion-Painting-Animation”, something like “animated painting frame by frame”.



Claudia Bitrán, Ask what time it is, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 25.5 x 28 cm. Courtesy: Walter Storms Gallery

CRISTIN TIERNEY



Claudia Bitrán, Or virtue, as you wish. But be drunk, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 25.5 x 28 cm. Courtesy: Walter Storms Gallery



Claudia Bitrán, You have to be continually Drunk, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 25.5 x 28 cm. Courtesy: Walter Storms Gallery

CRISTIN TIERNEY

Bitrán's particular pictorial technique serves the purposes of its contents, which have as main reference videos found on social networks, uploaded voluntarily by its users and made available to the public. By reusing them, Bitrán seeks to extract from them those hidden truths, desires and intentions – exhibitionism, consumerism, daily life – that have come to configure our visual culture in constant evolution.

The pictorial gesture, devoid of graphic line or defined contours, contributes to creating these paused scenes, as if in slow motion, in addition to a kind of mist that is typical of the environment charged with smoke, alcohol vapors and sweaty bodies. In both *Fallen* and *Frenzy*, the paintings show anonymous teenagers in anxious and euphoric states of intoxication. The brushwork, too, emphasizes in these series the instability of the characters: as they lose control over their bodies, the figures move in and out of abstraction.

For this exhibition, the artist has mainly selected video clips that can be understood in the context of Baudelaire's poetry. In his 1869 poem *Be Drunk*, Charles Baudelaire encourages us to be constantly "drunk," not necessarily in the sense associated with heavy drinking—or the mindless addiction that gives us instant mental and emotional satisfaction, but can also lead to immediate or long-term failure and embarrassment - but also because of emotions raised to the limit: joy and happiness, the feeling of belonging, of being free in the world.

CRISTIN TIERNEY

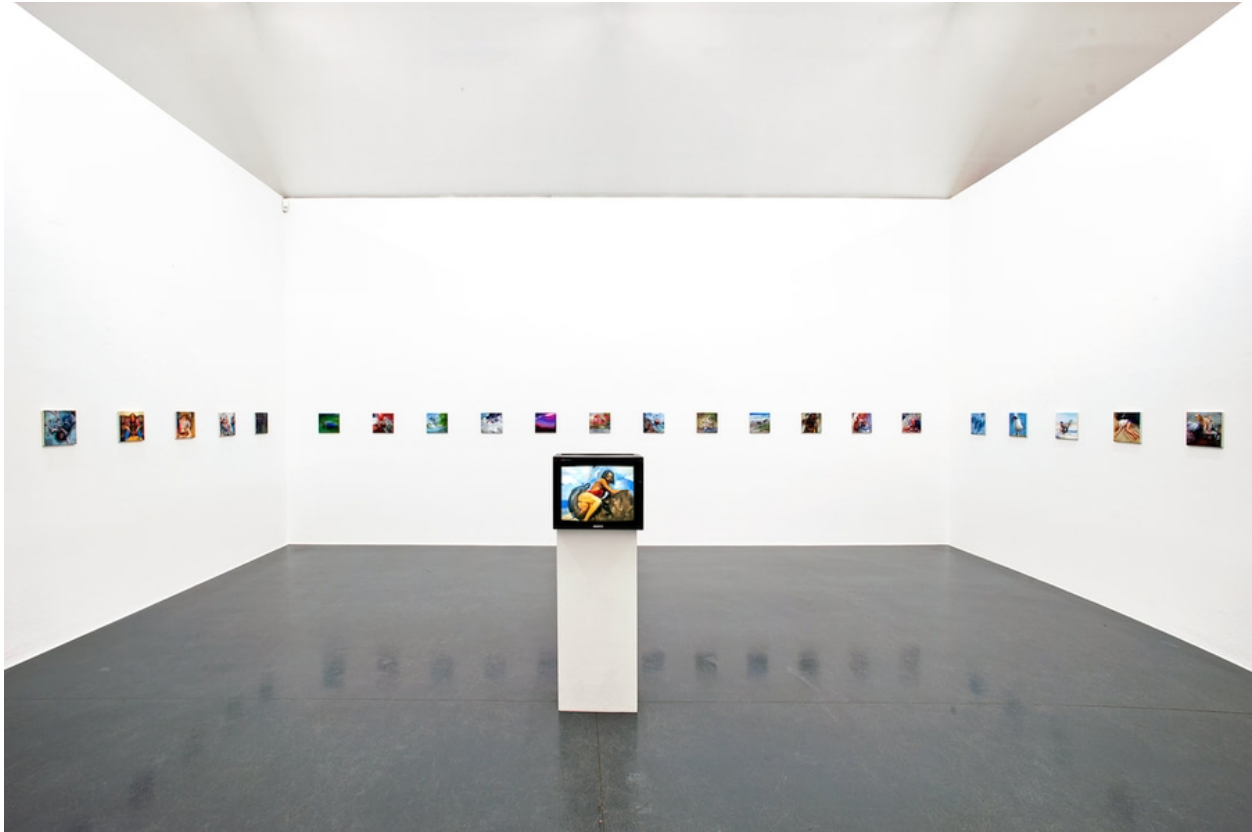


Claudia Bitrán, *On wine*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 25.5 x 28 cm. Courtesy: Walter Storms Gallery

Bitrán's paintings reveal the ghostly metamorphosis of the original material, while the animations serve as documentation of the evolutionary stages of the paintings. The process is empathic and, at the same time, revealing of grotesque and abysmal behaviors, of the complexities, pressures and anguish of adolescence, in a present where the viralization of private life on the Internet has been exacerbated by the pandemic.

By painting frame by frame these young people in an unconscious or semi-conscious state, the artist breaks down layers of emotions and conflicts, of joy but also of violence, opening a new door, in their case, towards the representation of women by a woman in painting, and towards drunkenness as a theme in art, identifying at the same time with that mental state of perdition, debauchery, disorientation, ecstasy, vulnerability, euphoria and escape in which others have been, as individuals and as a society.

CRISTIN TIERNEY



View of the exhibition "Be Drunk", by Claudia Bitrán, at Walter Storms Galerie, Munich, Germany, 2020-2021. courtesy of the gallery

CLAUDIA BITRAN: BE DRUNK

Walter Storms Galerie, Schellingstraße 48, Munich, Germany

From November 26, 2020 to February 27, 2021