

Jānis Avotiņš

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IBID PROJECTS

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IBID PROJECTS is pleased to present our third exhibition with Riga-based painter Jānis Avotiņš, one of the most significant artists of his generation to have emerged from the Baltic region in the past decade. It will be the most extensive display of Avotiņš work in the UK to date.

Jānis Avotiņš work is sourced from discarded magazines from the USSR, post-war national picture books and photographs of poets, artists and intellectuals in the Soviet Regime. His paintings awaken a familiar signifier in the collective memory but neutralize emotion through the articulation of what lay in the absent or invisible part of the canvas, which suggests a kind of void. The subjects themselves are a contradiction: although they have nothing to do with the crimes under communism, they still served as model Soviets photographed for propaganda purposes. Through this new series of work, Avotiņš poeticizes the conflicting relationship to a Soviet past by translating the historical photo into the painterly.

Central to Avotiņš technique is the way paint is applied in thin washes of pale, bleached colour overlaid with small alternating brushstrokes. Whilst some of the artist's scenes mimic the look of old, Soviet-era photographs, others recall the contemporary appearance of his hometown. Many scenes seem to be part or wholly imagined; dream-like visions of the past, or slowly reconstructed memories of friends, places, events and situations.

His new body of work consists of double portraits of men. The subjects look on with serious and sometimes grave facial expressions. They appear to be timeless, unobtrusive, conservatively dressed; melancholy emanates from them. Accordingly, the spectrum of thinly applied colors is sparse. The poignant faces of the subjects emerge, while the remaining parts seem to blend into the background.

Jānis Avotiņš was born in Latvia in 1981 and lives and works in Riga. Recent solo shows include *Jānis Avotiņš*, Johnen Galerie, Berlin, DE, *Implicated*, Akinci Gallery, Amsterdam, NL and Rüdiger Schöttle, Munich, DE. Recent group shows include *Is It That He Does Not Seek The Truth, But Does Want To Influence?*, Riga Art Space, Riga, LT, *After the Fall*, Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, NY, US and *Painting Triennial*, CAC, Vilnius, LT.

For more information or images, please contact chelsea@ibidprojects.com