

BERLIN GALLERY WEEKEND 2017



CURA.

Lovers of painting were also rewarded. Van Hanos' works at Tanya Leighton seemed informed by an acidic pessimism; motives included the earth being smashed with a hammer by the moon

(*Dark Side of the Moon*, 2017) or a business man in miniature sitting in a woman's lap (*Little Man*, 2017). Executed in a weirdly generic style, it was only after a while that the dark and precise humor of these paintings pierced through the impersonal mist they'd initially exuded, making them all the more creepy and successful. This tactic of visual harmlessness was also fruitfully used by Grace Weaver at Soy Capitan: her almost naive depictions of what appear to be millennials interacting with their digital devices or exercising in public spaces seem to reflect on generation X's dependency on aspirational aesthetics and its failure to reach any sort of satisfaction within an Instagram-driven bubble of neoliberal egomania. A very different approach to the medium seemed Brent Wadden's at Peres Project: here, abstract painting, realized by assembling handwoven weavings into semi-regular compositions, came across as refreshingly down-to-earth. Yet, aside from their obvious aesthetic appeal, Wadden's pieces made you think about art as labor, as a form of tangible productiveness, and somehow you could perceive the artist's body, his effort and work, within these beautiful patterns. Among a myriad of topically dense exhibitions, of which some tended towards sensationalism, his was certainly a highlight.

Labor and its somber implications were also a topic at Buchholz, where one had the privilege to admire some of Melvin Edwards' *Lynch Fragments*—wall pieces composed of tools, knives, pieces of machines and metal, melted together into dark and condensed semi-abstract evocations of brutality; the works on view, realized between 1986 and 2012, are part of a series the artist started in the 1960s as a response to racial violence in the United States; while small in scale, the effect and topicality of Edwards' pieces at Buchholz is intense and broad; it goes way beyond the fancy Charlottenburg apartment in which they are displayed, and stays with the viewer for quite some time. So did the readymades of Maximilian Schmoetzer at ROOM E-10 27 at CENTER (again, not part of the official program), through which the artist addressed the destruction of Palmyra by ISIS, its surrounding ecosystem and therefore, the fatal consequences of colonial and neo-colonial