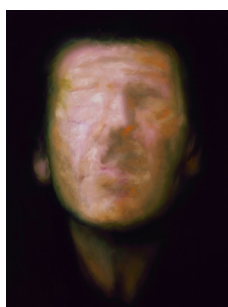
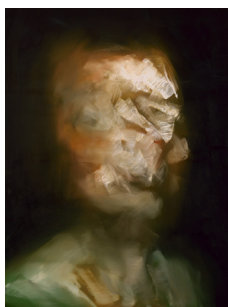


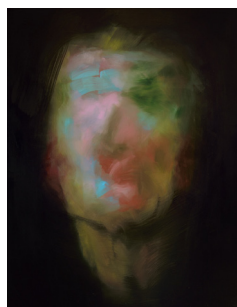
unscrupulous 22
200x150cm
oil on canvas
2012



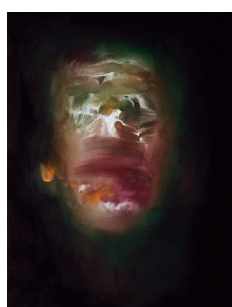
Miteswax 53
200x150cm
oil on canvas
2017



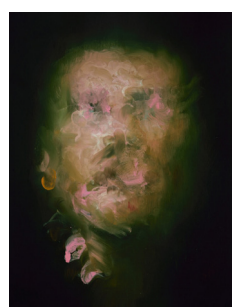
Peachman
100x75cm
oil on canvas
2022



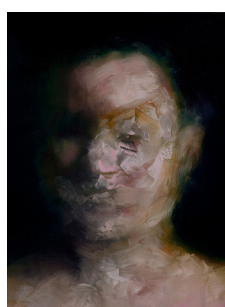
Miteswax 66
100x80cm
oil on canvas
2018



Miteswax 68
40x30cm
oil on canvas
2018



emperors error
40x30cm
oil on canvas
2017



Father
40x30cm
oil on canvas
2018



candyman 10
40x30cm
oil on canvas
2015

Was the portrait, especially the self-portrait, still a self-confident expression of artistic expression of artistic sovereignty and individuality, in the late 20th century it became an expression of increasing insecurity. In the face of a restlessly accelerating, over-economised world in which the individual is losing importance on a daily basis, the question of how one can still be adequately portrayed.

When we speak of the self-portrait, we associate it with a specific expectation that is strongly characterised by romantic art theory, in which art is an „expression of the artistic personality and the inner truth of the depicted“.

In the self-portrait, the reconstruction of the outer appearance with the depiction of the inner state. We associate this with a special form of immediacy, since for us the face is not only the place where a person reveals their innermost being, but also because image of the artist is characterised by the idea that his social position makes him an almost exemplary existence.

Jean-Claude Schmitt sees the face „as a sign of identity, a carrier of expression

and finally as a place of representation in the literal sense as an image as well as in the symbolic sense of representation.“

So what does it mean when an artist like Wolfgang Grinschgl breaks up and distorts the physiognomy of his face, deforms himself deformed and undergoing uncanny mutations? Are these works only about the subjective representation of an individual or also

a depiction of our time?

Every self-portrait always reflects the social notions of the concept of the subject reflected. After the discussion about the „irredeemable self“ at the turn of the century, in the 1960s, the discourse about the disappearance of the subject reaches a high point.

Post-structuralism has put a radical rejection to the traditional concepts of subjectivity, artistic authorship and originality.

Not only were the „end of painting“ , the „ruins of the museum“ and the „death of the author“ were discussed, but also the „end of the human being“ in Michel Foucault’s famous phrase: „Man disappears like a face on the seashore in the sand.“

Jean Baudrillard constructed „ego multiplicities“ and diagnoses a „fractal subject“, „which, instead of itself, is in favour of a purpose or a whole that transcends itself, splintered into a multitude of miniaturegos, which all resemble each other [...]“

Here is where Wolfgang Grinschgl's examination of his own image starts.

Grinschgl takes up the frontal portrait of the Renaissance, which places the artist in a confrontational relationship with the viewer, but the mirror of self-examination is broken and throws countless versions and fragmentary views of the face towards us.

Just as we all wear different masks in social interaction

and develop different self-images,

Grinschgl creates not just one image of himself, but countless.

Between his face and the gaze of the viewer, however, he always introduces an additional layer, a membrane that which either conceals his face or protects it from the direct gaze of the viewer.

From an amorphous mass of colour, accentuated in white, a face emerges as something transitory

that tells of the disappearance of the subject and the fragmentation of identity.

„The face has a great future, but only if it is destroyed and dissolved.“

write Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari about the politics of the face.

They no longer understand the face as a natural given

but as the product of a cultural development and thus as an expression of power relations. The many faces

of Wolfgang Grinschgl show forms of impairment, deformation and dissolution which, in the sense of the open work of art can certainly be read as traces of sociopolitical power relations.

The self-portraits by Wolfgang Grinschgl are protocols of a dissolution, an erasure, in which the painterly accentuations of the dark facial openings provide a final point of reference, a last resistance against the disappearance. To what extent the portraits are a reproduction of his inner self, a depiction of psychological processes or even an externalisation of his self, remains to be seen.

Whether truth or fiction, reflection or invention, as a condensed image of the human being

his face represents the external view of the „exhausted self“ that is of fears, constraints and paralysing feelings of exhaustion and inadequacy.

And it raises the question of how, in a post-human world a representation of the human being is still possible at all.

Roman Grabner,
Universalmuseum Joanneum