

KNAPP SHINING
REBECCA MICHAELIS AND MONIKA BRANDMEIER

Showing November 7—December 4, 2010
 Opening Friday, November 6, 2010, 7 p.m.
 at Stedefreund, Dorotheenstr. 30, 10117 Berlin

Part 3 of the exhibition series The Magnifying Glass

What unites the artists Monika Brandmeier and Rebecca Michaelis is the question of the presence of things in space. They create two- and three-dimensional works that respond to the specific architectural characteristics of the exhibition space, investigating its interplay of surfaces and depth, order and symmetry. These interventions in space are the product of each artist's distinctive approach.

Besides smaller works on paper, Rebecca Michaelis has also created a wall piece based on geometric shapes, which form an abstract pattern through repetition. This orderly structure is contrasted with a painterly use of color, which—unlike line and surface—emphasizes the pattern's discontinuity. The superficial rationality and regularity of the forms employed is countered by formal compositional elements denoting illusionism and materiality, as well as gestural intuition. In the image, the severe and static nature of the architectural shapes is juxtaposed with dynamic formal elements seeking to engage the viewer on an emotional level. Viewers are drawn into a play of ruptures and shifts in perspective that afford a view of the space's underlying coordinates, thereby invoking a subjectively constituted mental space at odds with the real three-dimensionality of the object.

Monika Brandmeier's pieces draw heavily on the form and composition of elements in space. Like Michaelis's work, they tend to incorporate disconcerting features that heighten the physical presence of the objects being shown in the space, provoking the viewer to engage with them. The galvanized-steel sculpture "Lock," for example, with its formal vocabulary and the orthogonal geometry of its frame, presents a sober and stripped-down appearance, yet it has little to do with minimalist positions. Rather, its replica of a bike lock keeps open its connections to emotional antecedents, in which the viewer becomes enmeshed. The referentiality of things between form and expression gives rise to contradictions that are put on display and played off against one another, an escalation within the spatial configuration specifically intended to check the emptiness of space and discharge its tensions.

Michaelis and Brandmeier both draw upon twentieth-century abstract movements in order to react against them and combine geometrical aspects with poetic ones. They interrogate the limits and possibilities of the abstract beyond its juxtaposition with the figurative and the emotional, in that their works trigger feelings and associations while simultaneously conveying primarily formal criteria. Both artists thus subscribe to what Brandmeier calls a "subjective conceptualism" that gives viewers, in her words, a "BRIEF but shining" experience of each individual element.

Text: Anne Fäser

Exhibition Events:

What is the Significance of Abstraction in the Visual Arts Today?

Panel discussion, Friday, Nov. 12, 2010, 7 p.m.

Guests: Dr. Hanne Loreck (professor of art history, cultural studies and gender studies, HFBK Hamburg; author), Dr. Michael Lüthy (art historian, Freie Universität Berlin) and Erika Hoffmann (Hoffmann Collection). Moderator: Anne Fäser (project director, Stedefreund)

Subjective Conceptualism in Contemporary Art

Panel discussion, Friday, Nov. 26, 2010, 7 p.m.

Guests: Marcus Becker (art historian, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), Birgit Effinger (art historian, Goldrausch Künstlerinnenprojekt) et al. Moderator: Anne Fäser (project director, Stedefreund)