

SUSPEND DISBELIEF

Kerstin Gottschalk and Knut Eckstein

Opening September 3, 2010, 7 p.m.
Showing September 4—October 2, 2010
at Stedefreund, Dorotheenstr. 30, 10117 Berlin

“suspend disbelief” is not so much the concept behind the exhibition as it is an artistic approach that links Kerstin Gottschalk and Knut Eckstein. Their starting point is to set aside any concrete conceptions about what may be found in the temporarily existing possibilities with which, employing abstraction, the two artists interrogate both architecture and pictorial space. The materials they use (such as pasteboard, MDF, paint, paraffin wax, tape and stickers) are worked using minimal techniques: layering, stacking, arraying in rows, stretching, pouring, etc. The frequent repetition of these processes allow the works to appear in intermediate states, as it were, which may be incorporated into a new context when transferred to a different place. An interest in the ephemeral, the transitory, the unstable, tied to a real or constructed space, is shared by both artists, though in putting it into practice they draw on different concepts of abstraction.

Knut Eckstein builds abstract objects out of cardboard boxes stacked in or on each other and bound together. Color, form and volume, empty and piled surfaces are weighed against one another and held in a state of tension through compact bundling. Like installations, the objects occupy a place, and although they do not represent concrete spaces themselves (much less accessible ones), they interrogate the notion of architecture and construction. Eckstein alters their concepts as needed from one space to the next. More than transposition and modification, the folding-up and recording of the existing, the built, transforms the works into a new and unique aggregate state. Ultimately, the objects exist in a sort of transition or liminal state and are thus unstable in their physical perception.

Kerstin Gottschalk arrives at fragility, difference and instability by different means. Whereas Eckstein's boxes on the wall or floor are carefully bundled and cohesive, Gottschalk surrenders control, and intrinsic material laws take over. With paraffin wax, for example, she produces material flows on floors, stiles and mounted sheets of MDF, the very flow of the wax revealing an irreducible difference between pouring as painting technique and spilling as blunder, thereby shaking up habitual patterns of seeing and thinking. Her concentration on process, on the autopoietic, so to speak, places the focus on the material used, which appears in all its physicality, creating a powerful sensual experience. Through these techniques, Gottschalk constantly tries to reveal the boundary between real and pictorial space.

In the exhibition “suspend disbelief,” Gottschalk and Eckstein juxtapose their contrasting positions with regard to abstraction, creating a site-specific installation characterized by their distinctive approaches. Through abstract/sensual modifications, the exhibition space is redefined and put to the test at the most fundamental level.

Text: Anne Fäser
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