

THE MAGNIFYING GLASS

Exhibition Series in three chapters
Sept. 4–Dec. 4, 2010
at Stedefreund, Dorotheenstr. 30, 10117 Berlin

We use a magnifying glass when we want to take a closer look in order to examine details and things previously unseen, to bring objects closer to the eye and give them prominence. At the same time, the distancing effect entailed by magnification takes the thing observed out of context and turns it into a kind of abstract shape. This process of abstraction—triggered by a look through the magnifying glass—is regarded as largely irrelevant by most users of this optical aid, even though it seems to play a significant role in bringing things closer. “THE MAGNIFYING GLASS,” as a title for an exhibition series, seeks precisely to address this transformation into the abstract. The connection is created by the artist, who, like a magnifying glass, produces abstraction by looking at the actual.

The series, comprising three exhibitions with thematically linked events at Stedefreund, deals with abstraction. The point is to identify and simultaneously to leave behind historical roots such as constructivism and minimalism, their ideological implementation as well as the discursive debate between abstraction and figuration. The magnifying glass is turned, as it were, on abstraction, subjecting it to a new examination. The goal is to locate abstraction in the present day and to discuss various abstract positions. How relevant is abstraction today, and what meanings and possibilities are ascribed to it from the perspective of a younger generation of artists?

In their work, the artists taking part in the series react in contemporary ways to spatial structures and the processes involved in shaping materials, to the autopoietic, the processual, and to new media and electronic music, seeking in them a connection to social contexts and a current political space. A sensual component makes itself felt in each participant’s work, linking the seemingly neutral abstract formal language with a “subjective conceptualism.”

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Translation: Patrick Hubenthal



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#1
 suspend disbelief
 Kerstin Gottschalk and Knut Eckstein
 Sept. 4—Oct. 2, 2010
 Opening Friday, Sept. 3, 2010

Kerstin Gottschalk and Knut Eckstein share an interest in the transitory, the unstable, which they pursue in abstract works in different ways. While Eckstein constructs objects by compactly bundling cardboard boxes, shifting them into new aggregate states from one space to the next, Gottschalk's process involves surrendering control and allowing intrinsic material laws to take over. In the exhibition "suspend disbelief," the artists juxtapose these contrasting positions, 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.

#2
 concert
 Katja Pudor, Antonia Nordmann, Nyla van Ingen and Gita Cooper-van Ingen
 Oct. 9–30, 2010
 Opening Friday, Oct. 8, 2010

The traveling and evolving exhibition project by Pudor, Nordmann and van Ingen takes the artistic process as its subject and voids the distinction between working in the studio, mounting an exhibition and the post-opening setting. "concert" refers to the collective artistic product. "Rehearsals" have been taking place since January 2010; at them, Antonia Nordmann and Katja Pudor meet in various places and work for a certain length of time with a predetermined material in the same pictorial space. They combine ornamentation, installation and painted and drawn textures into rhythmic, atmospherically charged productions. Additional positions, spanning a range of media, are added at a later stage of the process.

#3
 knapp shining
 Rebecca Michaelis and Monika Brandmeier
 Nov. 7–Dec. 4, 2010
 Opening Saturday, Nov. 6, 2010

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 react to the specific architectural characteristics of the exhibition space, investigating its interplay of surfaces and depth, order and symmetry. Both draw upon twentieth-century abstract movements in order to react against them and to combine geometrical aspects with poetic ones.

