

NEUERÖFFNUNG

Organized by Benjamin Horns

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Clouds of paint, applied with an airbrush, betray the canvases to which they've congealed. Floating in our undefined zone, light falls on their surfaces from an unseen source casting shadows and illuminating shapes behind the cloudy colors. As we wait for the smoke to clear, these paintings grin contentedly in their emphatically liminal state.

Can we look through a painting? Where is this surface? In certain works, the hand inscribes a relationship between a body and an image, between the gaze of the eyes and the screen as its object. This hybrid language invokes a slower way of looking.

Naked female bodies and a cactus appear in some photographs. The physical plane of the printed photograph becomes the subject, as pools of oil, ink, and dye break up each composition before being re-photographed. A confounding sense of indeterminacy regarding which subject the eroticizing gaze should be directed at pervades these images, compelling those of us who give a fuck about such things to ask Mao's question regarding art once again: "For Whom?"

Two vitrines display found objects and debris gathered from the ruins of a decimated steel mining town in rural Illinois, are suspended in resin. Like a photograph's connection to the place where it was taken, the slag in these boxes carries with it the history of its site, but also a sense of alienation that abruptly severs our access to said history. The alienation represented here is dialectical. Historical in regards to its function as evidence of the exploitation of the town's inhabitants, and immanent in regards to its continuing state of change and decay.

For furnishing's sake, the covers of recent issues of interior design and lifestyle magazines have been hastily transferred to standing cement blocks, humorously muting their real life counterparts. These equate themselves with the

luxuries that their surfaces depict, while their form rebukes the conditions of the contemporary art object intended to assimilate within the domestic zone.

Kiki and Bouba are two graphics developed by gestalt psychologist Wolfgang Köhler in 1929 to test his hypothesis regarding a non-arbitrary basis for naming. Here, Kiki and Bouba are simultaneously anthropomorphized and rendered transparent; at once endowed with symbolic agency, and stripped of the power of their empirical scientific origins. Stuck to the window, expressing pleasure or discontent with their supposedly correct and immutable names.

“Current Curriculum, Condition Report” both enacts and depicts Oedipal relations in art education, weighing them against increasing professionalization in the field. The collaboration acknowledges this deadlock as a choice between the lesser of two evils, and refuses to submit, or perhaps we are throwing ourselves at its mercy? We know that power, authority, and authorship are real, and won't be broken with simple platitudes about context and collaboration. The sculpture is a replica of the traditional movable walls used in art schools, suspended in the gallery as a mobile, like a piece of meat in a butcher's window. The paintings are mine, made in good faith. Justin has done a sort of damage and conservation on them, punching holes through them and then repairing those holes with some stuff he bought from the thrift store. He says they are “better now”. Honestly, the whole situation is pretty fucked up, and I'm not sure exactly how I feel about it.

Benjamin Horns