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Tillman Kaiser
NON È ANCORA ILLEGALE
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Kaleidoscopes are simple, old-fashioned and yet remarkably fascinating toys: if we look towards a light source through a small, telescope-like cylinder filled with multicoloured glass beads or similar, the reflection and rotation of the cylinder cause dynamic geometric patterns to emerge, composing multifaceted and mysterious images (of the world).

The effect is similar in Tillman Kaiser's paintings and sculptural objects, in which patterns emerge out of repetitive crystalline and geometrical shapes. The complexity of the manifestations are reinforced by Kaiser's working method, merging media such as painting and photography (including photograms or cyanotypes) and silkscreen in his paintings. In this way he combines techniques based on preparation and planning, and not generally associated with spontaneous expression, with the medium of painting which promises immediacy, spontaneity and expression through the artist's gesture and immediate treatment of the canvas. Kaiser plays with this ambiguity on various levels, allowing plan and coincidence, conception and improvisation to encounter one another in his works. The view of the world through a kaleidoscope simultaneously distorts it and emphasizes its complexity. Mistrust of simple explanations and pleasure in the diversity of the visible world can be seen as the basic attitude behind the artist's work.

Folds and geometric forms as well as the use of simple, "poor" materials distinguish Kaiser's sculptures, spatial objects and three-dimensional wall works. The somewhat futuristic forms simultaneously evoke the avant-garde and early modernism, in particular utopian projects such as the conquest and colonization of space. The reference to avant-garde currents of the 20th century is reinforced above all by the choice of materials: folded forms of cardboard and paper, sometimes combined with found and misappropriated everyday items, lend the objects the ephemeral quality of models or prototypes. Just as the basic structure of the paintings is often composed of crystalline and prismatically multiplied patterns, the sculptures too are built up of simple, repeated geometric forms. In addition to the image of the kaleidoscope as a form of interface between the artist and the world, the camera obscura - the simple pinhole camera - plays a major role. The current images are created by folding abstract, geometrical forms - partially out of paper - and exposing them with a large-format pinhole camera. After the development process the resulting "photo" is reworked further and painted. Kaiser approaches errors such as unplanned light leaks in the pinhole camera as a game of chance and evidence of the production process. The artist, who likes to place a certain distance between himself and his actions, asserts wit and humour as important elements in his work.

- Bettina Spörr, curator, Vienna Secession

Tillman Kaiser, born in 1972 in Graz, lives and works in Vienna.