

Cheyney Thompson

"10M/1000 ML/10 L"

June 6th 2013 - August 24th 2013

opening reception on Thursday, June 6th, 2013, 7-9 pm

Under the title "10M/1000 ML/10 L" Cheyney Thompson (* 1975, lives in New York) presents in his fourth solo exhibition at Galerie Buchholz a group of new paintings, drawings and sculptures.

The science of economics developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries predominantly in the medium of language. The impact of set theoretical and topological reasoning after World War II finally put this verbal tradition to an end. Paralleled by the mathematization of economics from the 1950's onwards, finance slowly moved from the margins of curricula at business schools to the center of value production. Its rise during the 1990's marks the technical actualization – mathematical models drawn with pencil on paper were put to the test with the help of computers – of an epistemic shift, which has been in prolonged hibernation. As early as in 1900, Louis Bachelier discusses in his doctoral thesis "The Theory of Speculation" the application of stochastic processes to evaluate stock options. It has since marked the most general strand, that has not only transformed the study of finance, but the functioning of markets themselves. Bachelier's main thesis is that the prices of stocks and similar securities follow a random walk and therefore the mathematical theory of probability can be applied, which was complemented in the 1960's by an argument that explicated this. Prices follow a random path, since any information available prescribes their development. This is taken into account by speculators and thus canceled out. Markets are efficient and only therefore subject to the arithmetics of chance.

A variant of such a random walk algorithm is put to work in this exhibition by Cheyney Thompson in order to produce paintings and sculptures. With regards to the paintings on view, its meander is placed into a three-dimensional color-system conceptualized by Alfred Munsell at the turn of the last century, which has been deployed by Thompson during the past years in order to tie his practice to the possibility of a rigorous quantification of color. The algorithm is programmed to cover a distance of 10 meters. The diverse positions the line drawn by it within the solid of Munsell's ten primaries can be translated into amounts of different hues – milliliters – Thompson finally applies on canvas. The algorithm – as a model which produces nothing but color quantities and as information the beholder knows about – withdraws the surfaces of the tableaux from the possibility to read their compositions as indices of intention. Painted in a color-spectrum in fact recommended by Munsell for reproduction, they negate from the start their singular sensual presence. The articulated brush traces, which ought to do nothing but spend the material, apparently struggle to escape the habitus of the painter. They are fraudulent in the sense that they cannot become an object of judgement. This is precisely so because one cannot even confirm by merely looking at them the application of their rule.

What they produce is a perspective from which the painter as well the viewer are excluded. They are opaque, not where their redundant materiality becomes visible, but by means of their reduction to an abstract informatization, which mirrors the intangibility of economic processes that they nonetheless break down within the finite form of painting: a test pad for the non-livable. It is the same algorithm Thompson resorts to for a set of sculptures. Whereas the paintings apparently take up the monstrous heritage of materialism, as it was first tentatively worked through by Impressionism, the sculptures appear to resume modernist painting's debt to architecture. A one inch cube, as its elemental form of volume, is made to multiply itself on the algorithm's path. Mimicking Parametricism's contemporary triumphal lingo, which

announces itself as the new global style of building, wearing the old mask of cast concrete, the bends and windings the cube stutters along produce shapes whose orientation remain unfathomable. To place those objects on the ground or on pedestals, whatever they might be doing there, expose them to gravity, let them crack, remains the only reasonable, maybe vital idiocy. The sculptures' program is ended at somewhat contingent points. Most models have broken underneath their own weight. What would it mean to not give in? It is the only way out from becoming fatalistic.

Simon Baier

A new monograph on the artist *Cheyney Thompson "metric, pedestal, cabengo, landlord, recit"* has just now been published in collaboration with Koenig Books, London and MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts.