

**Thomas Eggerer**

“In der Pyramide”

13 April – 25 June 2011

opening reception on Wednesday, 13 April, 6-9 pm

As if reflecting upon his own constant simultaneous engagement with the dialectic of abstraction and figuralism, Eggerer here occupies the point where both might begin or end. From the point of view of the focus of the new paintings, the four strokes of the letter M, all answers are defiantly arbitrary. Eggerer, focusing on the material of language as form, penetrates into the uneasy core of a traditional dialectic.

The broad fields of earth colors intersticed with vibrato lines, feature landscape components. Their multiple potential horizons hold a tense ground; the fields the lines presumably define might be contracting and/or expanding. As in outer space, it is potentially non-sensical to distinguish up to down from left to right, foreground from background.

The tenuous lines refer to the body. As if entering the tunnels of a pyramid, we stand on the absurd floor plan of a long-standing erection whose architectural aims are cartoon-like and alien. If not absurd, the lines of elbows and knees bend awkwardly like bones in an uncovered tomb.

What Napoleon saw in the crypt at Giza, what Alexander saw before and what Crowley saw later presumably could not be articulated in ordinary language. It is certain that after a night alone in the crypt of Giza, Bonaparte emerged in the morning a physical wreck. Some days later he abandoned his army in Egypt and returned to Paris to seize the destiny of the Revolution by the most brutal and cynical means. On his death bed, the defeated proponent of the letter N revived. When asked, he appeared ready to tell what he had glimpsed in the Chamber of Kings.

But Napoleon kept silent. What did he see?

From above and below, Eggerer's pyramid shows a mirrored M. At the congruence of the V's, at its very solidity, M is the most slippery and tenuous of foundations.

M, the thirteenth letter of the modern German and English alphabets, as Ben Jonson put it in 1635, “is pronounc'd with a kind of humming inward, the lips clos'd. Open, and full in the beginning: obscure in the end: and meanly in the midd'st.”

The letter is never silent, even when it hides in words like mnemonic and anemone. Related to the idea of Mother by spelling and long tradition, it is for many the closest letter to pre-literate expression.

In contemporary physics, M-Theory, the so-called “Mother of all Super-Strings”, purports to explain every event in all the universes via the pure math of super-miniscule string-branes wiggling through the universe's 11 dimensions. Interestingly, though the theory arose as recently as the 1990's, there is no consensus as to what exactly the M stands for. Membrane? Magic? Matrix? Mother? Monster? As with the name of 007's control, we are left in the dark.

“The trail leading to the unified field theory of all reality,” as Dr. Michio Kaku puts it, “is littered with the wreckage of failed expeditions and dreams.” Certainly, from deep in the pyramid, Eggerer's dreaming glimpses into the letter's arbitrary mechanics map out no escape from the revolutions of M.

Four collages feature figures engaged in yoga or other physical exercise among sculptures by Antony Caro. These precise and provisional works are the exhibition's only gesture to ordinary figuralism and abstraction. Here, by reference to Caro, the miscegenation of the separatist purities of form and content is performed as an archaeology of modernism.

Mark von Schlegell