

RETO PULFER

Zustand der Intensivierung

22.06. – 08.09.2013

kunstverein
nürnberg albrecht
dürer
gesellschaft

Opening: Friday, June 21, 2013, 7 pm

The Kunstverein Nürnberg – Albrecht Dürer Gesellschaft is pleased to present **Reto Pulfer's** first extensive institutional solo exhibition in Germany as part of the **Marianne-Defet-Painting-Scholarship** Programme.

Reto Pulfer investigates various conditions of mutability in his work. From a phenomenological point of view, a *state* is the observable perception of both stasis and movement. By engaging with the contradictory notion of a "state", Pulfer not only challenges the boundaries of linguistic signs and their concomitant meaning, but also reflects the way in which his works are perceived, inasmuch as they generate and develop impermanent, unstable situations. He does this not only through the choice of flexible, malleable materials, such as hand-dyed and hand-sewn fabrics, recycled bed sheets, paper and wood, but also by crossing boundaries between medial methodologies in the fields of painting, language, drawing, installation and performance. The interplay between the visual and words is a key component of his work, and he often applies it with references to the ancient method of the mnemonic or memory routine, by means of which the speaker can retain ideas and gain knowledge through memorable images or sounds. With equally weighted reference to the avant-garde of modernism and to the culture of the amateur, Pulfer emphasises the rehearsal as an entity and questions the fixity of classifications, such as inability, failure and workmanship. By means of various installation and performance strategies, Pulfer extends the boundaries of painting – which has been important for him from the start of his career as a self-taught artist – into the exhibition space in order to create tableaux that viewers can walk around and literally be enveloped by, rather than merely pausing in front of a painting.

The starting point for Pulfer's exhibition *Zustand der Intensivierung (State of Intensification)* is his preoccupation with astronomy and astronomical phenomena, which he has translated into a specific experience of space and time for his show at the Kunstverein Nürnberg. The natural phenomenon of a supernova is at the heart of his interest: by contrast to other heavenly bodies that die and cool down at the end of their lifespan, an exploding star can, for a short time at least, take on the luminosity of a whole galaxy and subsequently remain visible as a new orb in the firmament. Pulfer has approached the movement of energy by transferring associatively to the environs of the Kunstverein Nürnberg its ability to accelerate or decelerate; this takes the form of two spatial installations that address states of tension and relaxation. The installations concentrate upon the physical and psychological effects that can be perceived in two ways, on the one hand as an accelerated movement and, on the other, as an easing of tension and calm. The large gallery hall, not unlike a diaorama with its inward-facing windowed façade, becomes the backdrop for Pulfer's installation replete with extensive, draped materials, pastel drawings and ceramic objects, creating a strained abundance. The intensification of the spatial perception is also generated by additives from the food industry, such as flavour-enhancing

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condiments, stock cubes and dashi used in Japanese cuisine, as well as through self played and recorded sounds from the electric guitar. As a counterpoint to this, he has developed a balanced situation of calm contemplation in both small exhibition rooms by means of a salon-style hanging of a series of textile works and hybrid pictorial objects, as well as the provision of places to sit.

Pulfer's free-hanging textile work in the building's monumental interior connects his preoccupation with astronomy with the history of the former administrative building of the Bavarian Board of Milk Production, which now houses the Kunstverein Nürnberg. The today non-existent industrial site of the Milchhof, to which the building belonged, was designed by the German architect, Otto Ernst Schweizer and built in 1929–1931. Schweizer was also responsible for the construction of the planetarium three years earlier, which was situated on the outskirts of Nuremberg's Old Town. The structure was subsequently demolished by the National Socialists in 1934 because it resembled a synagogue. The work *Hallengeist (Spirit of the Hall)* from 2013 comprises a voile dyed with indigo-coloured ink and sewn-on eyes made from yellow kite fabric, effectively countering the somewhat sober, modernist architecture with a substantial setting: it hovers in the interior space like a knowing witness, informed about the history of the former planetarium, as well as Schweizer's architectural conception for the Milchhof as a "cathedral of labour" in keeping with the "New Sobriety" zeitgeist. By virtue of its bold, intrusive presence in the foyer, the work instigates a new, fictional narrative within the building, which now enjoys a semi-official character in its current incarnation as the home of various service industries, such as legal practices, tax advisors, dentists, furniture shops, as well as an art institution.

The exhibition represents a combination of exclusively new works realised during the artist's five-month long stay in Nuremberg as part of the Marianne Defet Painting Scholarship Programme. We would like to express our gratitude to the Marianne und Hans Friedrich Defet Stiftung for their generous support of Reto Pulfer's work. At the end of the exhibition a catalogue will be published.

Reto Pulfer (b. 1981, Bern, Switzerland) lives in Berlin. He has presented his works during the past few years in many international solo exhibitions, including shows at the Swiss Institute, New York (2013); Balice Hertling, Paris (2012); Instituto Svizzero, Milan (2011); Fondazione Pastificio Cerere, Rome (2011); Kunstverein Arnsberg (2009) and at the Wartesaal, Zurich (2009). He also participated in a number of group shows during this time, such as *Chat Jet*, Künstlerhaus Graz (2013); *A word for a play*, Kunsthaus Baselland (2012); *Allez-y, R4, Ile Seguin*, Paris (2012); *Hotavangardehot*, OSLO10, Münchenstein/Basel (2011/2012); *Wunder*, Deichtorhallen Hamburg (2011), as well as *Animism*, Kunsthalle Bern (2010).

For the generous support of the exhibition we would like to thank:

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