

In Development.

Britta Thie at Leopold Hoesch Museum, Düren, Germany

Sept 25th 2022 – Jan 7th 2023

Curated by Andreas Prinzing

In Development marks a return to Thie's artistic origins as a painter. The exhibition encompasses a sound piece and the artist's new painting series *More Atmosphere!* which takes its title from a phrase often used by film and television producers, who, seeking to create more evocative shots, call for 'more atmosphere!', a demand usually met with the production of fog or smoke by technicians on the set. 'Real' conditions, thus, are conjured by artistic intervention. The means of atmospheric production are centre-stage in Thie's new collection of works.

The paintings that comprise *More Atmosphere!* have their origins in Thie's parallel career as an actor. While filming a television series in Budapest, Thie began to consider the objects that surrounded her while she waited for her scenes. These objects provide the crucial - and crucially invisible - infrastructure of moving image production and popular entertainment. This paradox of present absence became a fulcrum for larger questions the artist seeks to pose about the invisibilisation of forms of labour, the often deceptive power of narrative, and the ways in which mind and object interact.

Over the course of the series' shoot, Thie came to think of the objects as companions of a kind, familiar presences with whom she came to feel a sense of kinship. To Thie, they were not human, exactly, but they had their own personalities. The works in *More Atmosphere!* serve as a kind of portrait gallery of these inanimate 'characters'. The experience of time is also central to understanding the works; using the 'old', 'slow' medium of painting, Thie depicts the hidden ecology behind the rapid flow of streamed and digital images that define contemporary media. Thie's photo-realistic images gesture toward the high-resolution visuals expected of contemporary television and cinema, wherein HD imagery is deployed to connote 'reality', all the while shaping the visual culture beyond the screen.

The works in *In Development* are not simply still-lives. They provide a specific perspective on the ways objects become players in a story. One may think of the literary trope of 'Chekov's Gun' - shorthand for a quote from the Russian playwright in which he stated that if one shows a gun in the first act of a play, that gun must go off by the end of the play. Chekov's gun is inanimate, but by its nature it is not innocent. Britta Thie's lighting rigs, trolleys, and cameras are not the kind of narrative devices that Chekov's Gun is understood as, but like the people who operate them, their presence is irreducible in the production of the endless flows of images and narratives that now dominate popular media consumption. In a wry upending of hierarchies, Thie offers a pointed reminder that without the spotlight itself (and the person who operates it), no actor could dream of their moment in the limelight.

Britta Thie (*1987 in Minden) lives and works in Berlin. She studied at the UdK Berlin and Cooper Union in New York. The artist has most recently had solo exhibitions at Nassauischer Kunstverein Wiesbaden (2021) and Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach (2018), among others. Her work is currently featured in the group exhibition "Identity Unproven. New Acquisitions from the Federal Collection" at the Bundeskunsthalle Bonn and was recently featured in "How (Not) to Fit In - Metaphors of Adolescence" at Villa Merkel, Esslingen. In addition, her work has been shown several times in film and theatre festivals.