

What is certain? Is there anything that is certain? And is the definition able to offer certainty? Can it exist at all? As the person opposite, artist Helen Beck, who currently lives in Karlsruhe, creates objects from daily life that are altered through minor interventions, which deviate slightly from their examples, playing on the margins of their definition; searching for the non-grasping of their definition.

Dealing with and the staging of everyday objects have a long tradition in art, from still-life to ready-made to pop art and the sculptural objective art in which they are incorporated. Yet Helen Beck's work focuses on the function of the objects. She brings their nature and their functionality into question. To what extent is an object gifted, to what extent isn't it? What capabilities does it gain or lose if it changes? What object with what capabilities do we have to live without because it hasn't yet been invented?

Helen subtly creates small objects which ask these questions, and by bringing in linguistic definitions also function very poetically in terms of their interpretation. The objects she creates are linked to the reality of everyday objects, yet they also stretch far beyond it and lead their own lives because they are removed from their original function and have cloaked themselves in a new form.

It is in this way that the golden ring carries its valuable stone not facing outwards, but with it turned inwards; an envelope offers space for objects to be sent in two compartments but only one of them can be closed and can conceal its protective internal padding. A case for a ring contains a golden ring which is concealed under the satin and only leaves behind a vague outline. Can it really be a gift presented in this way? Will it be kept? The artistic form of the objects and their reminder of the familiar awaken new dimensions and draw references to visual and poetic resonances.

Helen Beck's delicate pencil drawings spring from a similar thought: when is a piece of writing a readable carrier of information and messages, and from what point can letters free themselves from their functional readability and become an autonomous game which is as confused as it is clear, to become fonts whose drawn letters become independent and gain their own textual nature through squiggles, loops, overlaps and interweaving, through rhythm and in the way that they communicate with each other? Beck's visual poetry is almost anarchic and creates the desire to go beyond the limits of definitions and to embark on games that have no rules.

In contrast with the delicate objects and drawings by Helen Beck are the large format pictures on canvas by Holger Endres.

With a 2.5-cm paintbrush, he places consistent black vertical stripes on the blank scrim. After every hand painted line, the artist leaves a small space, before starting with the next black stripe, drawing it across the screen, starting from the top and working to the bottom. He doesn't use any masking tape. The natural-coloured fabric shines through in the spaces, becoming a key additional part of the image whose light beige tone contrasts strongly with the black. Figure and background, painted colour and fabric colour therefore create a uniform image.

At least at first glance, Holger Endres' vertically oriented framework of lines creates a uniform structure which takes in and controls the complete area of the image. It is an all-over structure which due to its predictable regularity also has the potential to extend beyond the area of the image. In their entirety, the black lines have a bar-like effect which both dominate the image but at the same time obstruct the view and provide it with no opportunity to provide spatiality, affecting no illusion of image spatiality but only represent what they are. Frank Stella also painted black lines in the 1960s ('Black Paintings'), which were symmetrical patterns, however. His saying of "what you see is what you see" also applies to Holger Endres' paintings. The whole idea of the picture should be recognisable and open to experience without prior information.

On closer observation of the pictures, it becomes clear that the hand painted lines and spaces aren't quite as consistent as seems. The rough structure from the paint brush is visible on their outer edges: the edges are frayed, they begin to move and your eyes are irritated - your vision begins to scintillate. And there's more: although they may look identical at first, every line is in fact highly individual in terms of its detail. The images always seem to alternate between distance and proximity, irritation and uniformity. In certain pictures, the regularity isn't just interrupted in terms of the detail. Here and there, the black stripes overlap; for a brief distance, they then join together again like Helen Beck's pencil work, before separating once more and leaving behind space.

At other points, in the lower section, the lines suddenly bend: the bend forms an imaginary, visual, almost wave-type line, and the stripes then together become a meta-configuration, which due to the breakage from the uniform rows gain dynamism of their own and gain their own rhythm. In doing this, Endres creates images-in-images which remain inter-dependent, whose differing points are characterized by both deviations and a visual anarchy similar to the kind shown in Helen Beck's use of lettering and fonts. In this way, the works of Holger Endres and Helen Beck form an interesting complement to each other, even though their artistic approaches are very different.

Dr.Ulrike Lehmann

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