

Sprüth Magers London is delighted to present an exhibition of new work by acclaimed German artist Andreas Schulze, in his first solo show in London for five years. Presenting five ceramic sculptures and two major new paintings, the exhibition showcases the appealing complexity and subversive luminosity of Schulze's craft, a practice which has earned him widespread respect and extensive influence amongst both his contemporaries and younger artists for over three decades.

Andreas Schulze first came to prominence as a pivotal figure in the explosive flourishing of creativity that centred on Cologne in the early 1980s. Much of the art of that era was concerned with reanimating the practice of painting with an eye to exploring the emergent crisis of postmodernism. Although Schulze had close relationships with his contemporaries like Walter Dahn and George Condo, and the influential art collectives like the 'Neue Wilde' and the 'Mühlheimer Freiheit' which orbited around Monika Sprüth's gallery (founded in 1983) he nonetheless embarked on an independent artistic course, developing a strikingly unique formal language and tonal style which is most recently manifest in these new works.

Dominating the exhibition are two large-scale paintings which typify Schulze's vibrant and powerful visual style. While stylistically Schulze's paintings have often echoed and indeed drawn on a Modernist painting tradition which stretches back to artists such as Giorgio de Chirico, conceptually and attitudinally his work is suffused with the postmodern sensibility of his contemporaries. Colourful and curiously somber, Schulze's acrylic on canvas paintings evoke the melancholia attendant on the dislocated and fragmented nature of contemporary experience. Void of human figures but often featuring motifs which sometimes allude to, and sometimes directly represent, domestic and everyday objects, the paintings point towards fantasies of lost comforts and homes confiscated by a threatening and alienating world.

Juxtaposed against the Unheimliche atmosphere of Schulze's paintings are his more playful and ebullient, yet nonetheless ironic evocations of the Gemütlich in the ceramic sculptures. The sculptures tap into a vein of Schulze's practice that is replete with, and almost fetishises, bourgeois décor and ornamentation, which is symptomatic of Schulze's fascination with modern yearnings for contentment. Much of Schulze's work embraces archaic, naturalistic, sometimes naïve and often primitive styles and images to instill a kind of nostalgia for a prelapsarian existence which contrasts with the posthuman condition that Schulze explores in many of his paintings. These sculptures, which take the familiar, everyday shape of a jug glazed with a deep and strong base colour, and then adorned in a contrasting hue with an eclectic range of motifs, including abstract shapes as well as natural forms such as leaves and berries, are drawn from Schulze's 'Caraffa, Caraffe', project begun in 2006 in Grottaglie in Puglia, Italy, in collaboration with Le Case d'Arte in Milan. Each unique

ceramic has been made and hand-painted in the old potteries factory of the master ceramicist Franco Fasano, a process of making which also alludes to a sense of homely tradition which Schulze has sought to challenge and complicate in other aspects of his work.

Andreas Schulze was born in Hanover in 1955 and studied at the Gesamthochschule Kassel and Staatliche Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, where he is presently professor of painting. Important presentations include the opening show at Galerie Monika Sprüth in Cologne in 1983, and group exhibitions at MoMA in New York, Tate in London, the Kunstforeningen in Copenhagen and the 1997 Triennale in Milan. In 2010, there will be a major exhibition of his works in the Falckenberg Collection in Hamburg. He lives and works in Cologne.

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