

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is delighted to present a new solo exhibition by Berlin-based Austrian artist Gerwald Rockenschaub (1952, Linz), titled “Simple Philosophy”.

Gerwald Rockenschaub’s early works can be attributed to ‘neo-geo’ (‘new geometry’) painting, an art genre emerging in the 1980s that derives abstract form-finding from today’s environment and society, while referring to the abstract-geometric styles of 20th century art. Although Gerwald Rockenschaub has gradually turned away from the discipline of painting, his later installations and sculptures are based on similar ideas. In this context, his room installations are to be understood as minimalist objects on the one hand; on the other hand, they point to the exhibition conditions of contemporary art within the so-called ‘white cube’.

In the late eighties, Gerwald Rockenschaub introduced a radical paradigm shift by drafting his objects on the computer and having them produced by specialized firms. With its tendency towards industrial design development procedures, the artist’s working method reveals a fundamentally interdisciplinary character. This is also expressed by his interest in electronic music, for instance. Working as a sculptor, graphic artist, and disc jockey, he thus left his mark on the aesthetics of the nineties – combining pop music with minimal, conceptual and contextual art.

Gerwald Rockenschaub’s work incorporates space as an additional parameter: By placing his objects inside a room, he creates walkable sculptures. When the artist was featured in the Austrian pavilion of the 1993 Venice Biennale, he set up scaffolds on which the visitors could move through the room and thereby gain new perspectives.

Every show starts with a thorough exploration and analysis of the exhibition premises, which then allows the artist, by means of – highly precise and concise – manipulation, to comment on them and offer new ways of experiencing them. In the exhibition room of our gallery, Gerwald Rockenschaub will be displaying different objects made of lacquered MDF (medium-density fiberboard) plates. When entering the room, the visitor will immediately catch sight of a dark brown wall that, measuring nine meters in length, in turn blocks the view of the rest of the exhibits. The existing spatial structure is both altered and renewed by the nature of the works. “The presence of some of my pieces”, says the artist, “respects the conditions of predetermined connections and struggles against every space-limiting physical barrier.”

Upon walking further into the room, one will come across objects of different color. The rigorous geometry of the works is reminiscent of the minimalism of the 1960s, whereas their striking colorfulness appears to recall the playfulness of pop art. They evoke a variety of associations with

familiar themes and objects: They make reference not only to the vocabulary of modernism, but also to phenomena of our everyday culture.

It is often not clear whether to define the objects as elements of architecture, ready-mades, or autonomous sculptures in a traditional sense. All works may have a smooth structure and a seemingly cool surface, but thanks to their vivid coloration, they possess a sensual quality. Since Gerwald Rockenschaub conceives his works specifically in relation to a given exhibition space, every individual piece of art is linked to that space. The meaningful arrangement of these geometric works generates an area of tension that modifies the perception of both space and the works presented within. Rockenschaub aims to use his installations as some kind of generator for perception, playing on the viewer's attitude of expectation and visual experience and stimulating his reason. "I endeavor to balance my way – to put it somewhat boldly – across the abyss that separates pure sensuality from pure intellect", explains the artist.

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