

WITH YOUR EYES ONLY is an experimental project, which analyses the elements of perception in a collage of artistic interventions and objects. Within the frame of reductive art, levels of perception and the mechanisms of observation are questioned in a multidisciplinary, playful approach. Starting point are the phenomenological conditions of the artistic production like color, light, material and time which influence the structure and content of the reductive works and wherein exemplary questions related to perception open up. Visual structure is given to the artistic interventions by an architectonic display which refers directly to a changing spatial experience through its staging qualities and, at the same time, is a platform for the presentation of different perceptual levels.

Reductive art is a relational „language of art“, which aims at a specification of perception and develops abstracting image strategies via an analytical and emotional approach. Reductive works, thus, not only question their conditions, but also refer as translating media to further reaching contents and contexts which cannot be experienced straightly. In the foreground of the analysis of these strategies of reductive art and its communicating “physicalness” is the relation of the audience and the object, which contribute to an attempted clarification of the understanding of an artwork by linking up physically directed associative reactions, intellectual consciousness and the interpretation of meaningful content.

The topic also refers to notions of a participatory perception of an artwork following an open concept of the artwork, as it was postulated, amongst others, by the American artist Robert Morris in the 1960s. The approach to expose the artwork to a phenomenological experience was critically opposed by Michael Fried arguing that this understanding of art devotes itself to a dramatics which neglects the audience and negates the auratic right of the artwork (Art and Objecthood, 1967). In contemporary art and, in particular, in the reductive realm, these, also by Morris proposed options of creation, are consciously employed and discussed anew with respect to changing conditions.

The exhibition project analyses the encounter with strategies of a reductive image language in the context of a relational, perceptual behavior which depends on movement. With the approach of presenting the artistic objects and interventions in a relatively unconventional way, the exhibition consciously refers to the translating, transforming qualities of the respectively addressed levels of perception, which concentrate towards a contentwise expanded discourse. The artistic strategies are developed via various procedures and aim at the development of a dialogical process of perception including also methods which consider site- specific conditions that integrate the artwork in the present or generated space. In this process, the evolving objects serve as information carrier, which point at the content as such via a sensorial mode of perception. The transporting function of the

object points at different approaches of recognition, it invites physical participation and notional debate. At first place, it is often drawn on familiar and established perceptive patterns which yet have to be examined with respect to their up-to-dateness and the definite object.

The site-specific extensive intervention of the Belgian artist Ward Denys will set the parameters of the visual-artistic basic orientation of the overall project. Denys deals with the intersections of visual art and architecture, analyzing the borders of functionality and dysfunctionality, of surface and space. Often a physical reversion of the present situation and the object, resembling a mirror effect, is crucial. By this “suspension” of physical constants, he involves the audience and their perceptual reception into the work. Denys realizes this approach when “shifting” the exhibition space by turning the floor plan through 35 degrees, and thus requests, through the changed spatial orientation, also a shift and translation of the perception. This “new” floor plan is the construction plan for his site-specific structure, which, at the same time, serves as a platform for further artistic works.

This intervention lets evolve a new spatial situation, which the New York-based artist Dan Walsh takes up to interpret his notions on light as a phenomenological condition of artistic production. Walsh understands the medium of painting as a tool to bring into play the contemplation of perceptual mechanisms. The analytical experimental projects which he has pursued since years focus on the questioning of the perceptual process. Walsh will construct some site-specific objects of similar texture and form and subject them to different light conditions and -qualities, in order to analyse the changes of perception.

With interventions which are driven by painting, into present, often for this purpose conceived spatial situations, the Brussels-based artist Pieter Vermeersch creates site-specific environments. By means of painting, Vermeersch describes spatial conditions and their interaction with color. With these created color spaces, he lets the audience directly participate and addresses their sensorial levels of perception. Vermeersch's contribution will be developed in tight cooperation with Ward Denys integrating his architectonic intervention regarding color and space.

In the specially conceived video installation “Minimal Reality”, the Russian artist Alexandra Dementieva pointedly goes into the process of visual perception. We see a movement, an additive and subtractive time lapse which appears through a process of contrasting. In the course of a minutely detailed procedure and starting from a white “void” image, a complementary form evolves up to its anew emptying. We do not know and will not really know what it is that we perceive. But what we see is a process which refers back to the act of seeing; this process is enhanced to an

expanded sensorial level of perception by the cooperation with the Belgian sound artist Aernoudt Jacobs.

The contributions of the other participating artists will be presented in such a way that a tight context between the different perceptual levels evolves and a dialogue of the sensorial qualities is triggered. The totality of the exhibited objects shall concentrate, in a wider sense, to an image which is directed by a link of various overlapping, complementary or distinguishing perceptual patterns and contents. The works start a dialogue in the sense of perceiving and using visual levels of perception, and this shall be understood as a proposed physical, mental and sensorial expedition.

The exhibition project finally offers the opportunity to question critically and if necessary re-evaluate possible traditional expectations with respect to the own perception of reductive art. WITH YOUR EYES ONLY hints at a continuous recheck of the own position considering the interaction with present objects and situations.

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