

Johann König, Berlin is pleased to present the first solo exhibition of Los Angeles based artist Nathan Hylden in Germany. For the show a wall is build to divide the main gallery in to two spaces. The modified architecture creates an almost mirror doubled situation in which a series of nine large scale paintings are hung. The series is the result of pictorial-technical processes utilizing strict repetition and accumulation principles: During the first step of the process, the artist covers the canvases with a layer of gold paint, the effect of which changes as soon as one moves around the work. The canvases are then stacked into overlapping groups and sprayed with yellow paint over the intersections. Following this, with a stencil, black paint is applied onto each individual canvas creating a striped pattern. This working process allows for each painting to be both the starting point for and the result of the next one. The paintings are simultaneously positive and negative form and thus index of one another as well as autonomous and unique objects. In this way the work becomes an investigation of cause and effect in artistic production.

In the smaller backspace of the gallery, Hylden is showing a second series of works, which can be seen as a reflection of the work in the main space. Untreated aluminum sheets are screen-printed with the image of a blank canvas. Again all the works are serially connected. The screen-print series presents blankness as image, neutralizing the differences between the representational and abstract. Gilles Deleuze states: “modern painting is invaded and besieged by photographs and clichés that are already lodged on the canvas before the painter even begins to work.” The image of the blank canvas is a presentation of emptiness, which is also completely charged with meaning. The artist then juxtaposes painted canvases of the same dimensions to the prints, so that the relationship between image and material is complicated. Each image is the corporeal shadow of the one of the previous and the next.

Hylden raises questions of the circumstances of an image and its material manifestation as the subject of his art. To achieve this, he develops a syntax following the conceptual tradition. Painting is a medium traditionally linked with the idea of uniqueness. In Nathan Hylden's work it is used within a reflection of seriality of art based on mechanical repetition and an efficiency in the materials selected: unmixed, standard metallic paint, fluorescent spray paint, stencils, untreated painting surfaces. Each individual work is closely related to a series or a body of works resulting from actions carried out through a long period of time. Through the daily activity in the studio the repetitive gestures become the connecting element between all works. By showing the series in the exhibition “Still Now Again”, the artistic process freezes for a moment and thus reaches its culmination. A poster showing a canvas printed with the exhibition dates further emphasizes this temporal aspect.

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