

Svenja Deininger: Cache

Opening: Thursday, 16th November 2023, 6–8:30 pm

Duration: 17th November until 21st December 2023

Galerie Martin Janda presents the fifth solo exhibition of Svenja Deininger from 17th November to 21st December 2023.

A cache is a temporary memory in which information is stored so that it can be accessed more quickly later. It is a place that is invisible to computer users, an intermediate realm in which something is stored without actively showing it until it is needed again. The French *cache* is in the term: the hiding place and the lair.

Svenja Deininger's painting recognises such hidden storage places, which are also hideouts – invisible zones for the viewer, without which the painting would not be what it is. She covers layers of colour with new layers without the former disappearing completely. Instead, they form a resonating space that gives the final painting its chromatic depth. Sometimes Deininger's canvases are painted with a luminous colour on the back, so that a muted hue radiates from behind onto the image composition on the front, without revealing where this soft glow is coming from.

In some areas of these paintings, the textile materiality of the canvas comes to the fore, while in other colour fields, which are built up from successive glazes, the painting ground remains completely concealed in its texture. Colour seeps through various layers, in harmony (or not) with the geometric segments and gently rounded forms, from which the composition gradually emerges in a long process of organising and re-organising surfaces and colours, of overworking and reworking. Glossy and matt areas react differently to the surrounding light, which in turn dynamizes the works. It is an interplay of positive and negative spaces, of contrast and correspondence, as well as slightly varying volumes in the application of colour, which lend the canvas a gentle relief. Staggered contours and a composition, that in places looks like a picture within a picture in the large formats, create the impression of a tactile, almost object-like work.

A pronounced horizontality often meets slightly rounded segments that turn the upward striving in other directions. Other paintings push geometry back in favour of curved, sometimes fan-shaped fields of colour arranged off-axis. The contours and tonality of some of these round shapes are remotely reminiscent of human torsos. Sometimes they nestle together, then again, they rhythmize the painting and release it from its static state. Ultimately, they seem like affectively charged gestures – of togetherness, of cohesion, of community. In the works in which the contour of the canvas follows its form, they signalise an inviting openness, like a gesture towards us, the space and the other works in the room. Then again, when the interrupted verticality of stripes meets flattened curved forms, one perhaps thinks more of elements of architecture, of columns and capitals.

These pictures are abstract, but nevertheless filled with the figurative as a form of possibility. They store memories of something figurative, which are activated in the viewing process and overlaid by own memories. Surface, texture, colour and form fan out an open field of radically abstracted reality, which is articulated in different ways in the individual works.

Accordingly, the exhibition and each individual work form a complex reference system that unfolds over the time of viewing. Recurring colour tones or compositional similarities only become visible in the interplay of all the works through the active recollection of what was previously seen on another wall, in another room. The new works, which, as always in Svenja Deininger's oeuvre, are *Untitled*, thus form an ensemble with the place in which they are shown. Of course, they can also exist autonomously, but part of their eloquence arises from their interaction, when their vocabulary unfolds, and one work becomes an echo of the other.

The metaphor of the cache, the intermediate memory, thus also describes the recourse to a repertoire of forms, colours and textures developed over a long period of time, which in their combinations and configurations produce new works without fading out the previous ones. Each work is a repository of what determines its genesis and that of Svenja Deininger's oeuvre, itself: The processing of multi-layered impulses from reality into an abstraction, filled with references hidden beneath the surface; the slow process of a successive reworking of the painterly surface, which becomes texture and moulds fragile sculptural qualities until the painting develops its very own, almost tectonic presence.

The result is a pictorial system of signs that is constantly re-articulated, like syllables that become words from which new sentences are formed. In this context, one could also think of the relationship between *langue* and *parole*, which has characterised structural linguistics: On the one hand, language as a set of rules that are subjectively internalised and become a mental repository. On the other hand, the concrete speech act as the spatio-temporal realisation of this system. In its social dimension, this speech act generates new linguistic forms through dialogue – as a place of genesis and modification of the abstract system.

Svenja Deininger's paintings and their being exhibited are to a certain extent such speech acts in painterly form, and we, the viewers, are part of the dialogue.

Vanessa Joan Müller

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