

Monika Sprüth and Philomene Magers are delighted to present an extensive solo exhibition by Andreas Schulze in Berlin, featuring new paintings and a selection of works from recent years.

Ever since the 1980s, Andreas Schulze has focused on various interior views of our society. Most often, his works depict everyday landscapes and bourgeois idylls which he constructs as subtle, parallel worlds to reality. His early paintings consist of intensely colored compositions in which the dimensions of sculptural globes and other geometrical forms are shifted and inner pictorial perspectives constantly change. Schulze situates motifs which relate to the formal language of Conceptual Art and Minimal Art in illusionistic spaces which above all seek sensory experience, humor and immediate contact with the viewer. In his later works, Schulze paints suburbs, single-family dwellings or living rooms which are carefully provided with furniture, lamps, rugs and porcelain. Furthermore, he designs large-format spatial installations which extend the themes of his pictures into the exhibition space by means of found objects and his own sculptures. His works establish complex relationships between worldly objects and ornamental décors which make reference to both bohemian lifestyles and bourgeois normality. Simple, often unnoticed objects approach each other in enigmatic freedom: they become the protagonists of a concealed narrative and are assigned a performance filled with significance. The artist gives thematic treatment to the power of illusion within painting which he always ironically disrupts in the pictures. In his works, the things do not hide the fact that they are imitations, and as signs they refer back to themselves in precise self-awareness. Schulze's deserted, melancholic landscapes and interiors convey both coziness and menace. They manifest the social yearning for secureness and comfort as well as an estrangement of the 'private' in which the bourgeois need for harmony turns out to be narrowly restrictive.

In Berlin, Andreas Schulze is presenting his works in a specific setting within the exhibition space, which thereby becomes a component of the suggestive pictorial spaces. The arrangement interweaves real and fictional space, and develops a productive interplay between painting and installation. In the small exhibition space, *Ohne Titel (Vorhang)*, 1991, and *Ohne Titel (Dreckecke)*, 1985, are presented. The curtain made of felt, artificial leather, and curtain cloth shows the reduced facade of a single-family house. As a room divider, it alludes to a practical use in an everyday living space and thereby comprises a sculptural image which, in a humorous manner, summons up various aspects of visibility and voyeurism in the exhibition space. Positioned in front of these works, in a wall niche, is the work *Dreckecke* which consists of three hand-woven rugs. Despite the reference to *Fettecke*, 1982, by Joseph Beuys (who was a professor at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf at that time, where Andreas Schulze also studied), the object may be more immediately read in the less theoretical context of the popular German saying 'In four corners all around, love should abound':

Dreckecke evokes comfortableness and a place of quiet retreat. With the indication of an uncertain opening in the space, however, it becomes a passive-aggressive formation in which the viewer, as in all works of the artist, can never be sure of his own position – whether he is situated inside or outside a space, still out in reality or already within a dream.

Thereby, the display of the series of new paintings on the window side of the large hall in the gallery activates the imaginative power of the viewer: they consist of the serial motif of windows whose painted edges replace an actual picture frame. The installation of the windows offers a view onto the facade of a high-rise building. The trompe l'oeils do not define which perspective the viewer occupies. They remain empty projection screens and show the artist's unpretentious treatment of a motif which played an important role in the history of painting from Romanticism to Surrealism.

On the opposite wall Schulze presents the painting *Ohne Titel (Morris Nolde/Rügen)*, 2009, which combines various styles of painting and familiar landscapes from art history such as *Kreidefelsen auf Rügen* by C. D. Friedrich with Morris Louis' *Unfurleds*. The painting demonstrates Schulze's working mode, in which he makes reference to different styles and set-pieces and transforms them into his own pictorial language, where visual experience has precedence over clear contents. Besides, *Ohne Titel (5 Sorten Wasser)*, 2011, depicts various aggregate phases and appearances of water. As abstract signs they are assembled into an ornamental surface that subtly oscillates between two- and three-dimensionality.

Furthermore, the painting *Ohne Titel (Wie spät ist es) I*, 2010, is part of the exhibition. The work's structure relates to the face of a watch, whose dials and minute-lines turn out to be an energetically charged construction. In a Dadaist manner, the elements become a composition imbued with a free rhythm.

The exhibition also features three diptychs, entitled *Ohne Titel (Autos mit Lichtern)*, 2010. In these works, bright circles and forms shine like the head- or rear-lights of cars out of darkness into the interior space. The white border stripes of the pictures surrounding the lights are made from wall plaster and thereby refer back to the texture of the real exhibition wall: here as well, the concrete exhibition space is transformed into a stage upon which the works of Andreas Schulze become scenes of an open narrative structure.

Andreas Schulze was born in Hannover in 1955. He studied at the Gesamthochschule Kassel and at the Staatliche Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, where he has been a professor for painting since 2008. In

1983 Monika Sprüth opened her gallery with a solo exhibition by Andreas Schulze. During the 1980s, he worked in Cologne in the circle of the Mülheimer Freiheit and the Junge Wilden, but quite early on he distanced himself from an expressive, spontaneous style and a focus on the artist as subject. Last year his works could be seen, among other places, in the large survey exhibition INTERIEUR. Werkschau Andreas Schulze at the Sammlung Falckenberg in Hamburg, as well as at the Leopold-Hoesch-Museum in Düren. On the occasion of these two exhibitions, an extensive catalogue was published in September 2010.

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