

KRIWET (born 1942 in Dusseldorf) started his career in 1961 when he published “Rotor”, a piece of literature completely written in lower case and without any punctuation marks or blanks. Rather than exploring the paradigmatic construction principles of meaning, the work considers language as merely visual and phonetic material. Being one of the first artists later referred to as multi-media artists, KRIWET began to transfer these practices of Concrete Poetry into other media in the 1960s and 1970s: he produced sound collages and film montages, created serial graphic reproduction art and printed linguistic fragments and neologisms onto sheet metal and tarpaulins, and distributed his creations by using the mechanism of print media and printed advertising, the jargon of which he satirised at the same time; his “Poem Paintings” from these decades are linguistic images painted on large-formatted canvases. The common ground of all these works is the artist’s concentration on the materiality of language, beyond its representative function as a carrier of meaning of one clearly determined signified.

The artist’s fourth exhibition at BQ combines early sound collages and slide projections with a recent series of work, “Palimpsests”, that KRIWET has been creating for the last two years. These works on paper exhibited in the main space of the gallery are reproductions of collages made of photographs and xerox copies of earlier artworks and texts, of private notes, documents, and photographs. The surface of the paper is covered with a delicate black or white fibre net. Its raster structure refers to serial proceeding mechanisms but the fine mesh also frustrates any clear recognition of the images and texts underneath. The “Palimpsest” works compose a blend of personal and artistic biography that interpenetrate and that are held together by the subtle net of subjective memory.

The presentation of “Palimpsests” is encompassed by two early multiple projections of several series of slides in the entrance area and in the back room of the gallery. In the front room, two series of black and white slides are projected onto each other, continuously forming new collage-like images by overlapping. In the back room, BQ for the first time presents KRIWET’s colour film montage “Las Vegas” (1977, initially recorded on 16mm); in addition, excerpts of this film that KRIWET produced at the time as slides are projected onto the walls. In each of the two rooms, the film and slide screenings are combined with the sound pieces “Modell Fortuna” (1972) and “Dschubi Dubi” (1977). The media of sound, video and slide projection thus create another level of overlapping and interpenetration: in the exhibition context, these multimedia palimpsests that are based on early fragments keep generating new images and connections by means of recombination. They illustrate the timelessness of subjective consciousness that is formed anew at any moment by the awareness of one’s traces of memory and by their reinterpretation.

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