

The Jablonka Galerie is pleased to present works by US conceptual artist Matt Mullican in cooperation with Galerie Mai 36 in Zurich. Since the 1970s, the life and work of the artist – born in Santa Monica in 1951 – have centred on explaining how the world is ordered. By means of a specially developed system, Mullican combines “everything with everything else” and “orders the world” with a view to understanding and explaining the entire universe. His cosmological model is designed to answer “the big questions in life”: Where do I come from? Why do things happen as they do and not in some other way? Where do I go when I die?

Mullican classifies and categorises the wealth of “collected materials” through his own complex order system – a system shaped and structured by recurring symbols, signs and colours. For instance, the colour red stands for the subjective, blue for the everyday world, green for matter, yellow for ideas and black and white for language. The artist combines this colour symbolism with a system of pictographs that he borrowed or created himself. These symbols, which Mullican derived in the early 1970s by abstracting and copying comic books, stand for everyday things such as heaven, life, fate, demons and angels, death and hell. When combined with one another, they allow him to symbolise virtually all human conditions. Mullican also makes a firm distinction between between levels of perception and levels of consciousness, using hypnosis to allow him to bring these areas together. Before giving performances while hypnotised, he discusses with his hypnotist what he would like to do or what he should do while under hypnosis (e.g. reading a newspaper, drawing – many of his drawings were done under hypnosis – or singing). This process, which allows Mullican to penetrate another world, is one that he terms “going into the picture”.

Matt Mullican has selected five banners for the Böhm Chapel exhibition. All five banners have the same square shape and a blue, black, red, yellow and green border. The symbols themselves are black and white circles – Mullican’s personal model of a cosmology. Both the symbols and the colours are of great significance. The banners in the Böhm Chapel are hung from left to right, allowing them to be read easily. Perceived in this way, the first banner symbolises the subject, the second language, the third art, the fourth the world – and the fifth brings together four elements.

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