

GALERIE GISELA CAPITAIN

LUKAS QUIETZSCH

dstryr

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There is an imminent risk that we will never be able to fully access our own pasts, nor for that matter our always-already absent present. Defense mechanisms such as repression guard the gate, as does the widespread tendency to understand history as a sequence of ideas, names, and dates rather than actual material conditions.

If the zeitgeist of postwar America was a return to traditional values, Campbell's Soup—with a label design unchanged since 1912—was its concrete iteration. Warhol, who appropriated the product said that the power of Campbell's Soup Cans was its ability to “mark a time,” leaving out what might have resided inside: the image of the figure who fed him as a child.

Lukas Quietzsch does not appropriate nor portray objects in a representational manner—any semblance thereof is mutated through fragmentation, displacement, and duplication—but a ghostly air of their design is nevertheless present. I can see elements from a CD cover that I can't quite place; the repetition of a tribal-stylized “A;” sections of the Pac-Man maze gone murky; LSD-blotters; the drawing of a cell; black holes and teddy bears.

To recognize is to bring back to mind. To partially recognize is to recall a detail of an absent object or its immediate surroundings; it's the inaccessibility of the mark, and the overwhelming excess of an “inside,” “around,” “nearby.” It is a key in a lock that won't turn. If these paintings are allegorical montages of missed marks, how come they present with the intactness of a mirror; the self-evidence of a photograph? And why do they seem to reflect, in a flash, glimpses of the recent past?

One answer might be found in the artist's “unproductive” approach to their own work: a preoccupation with the power of association and its inherent destruction as desire moves from one object to another; with a working through rather than the conscious encoding of ideas. Here—where the can is burst open, and it's less about stuff going in or rather on—moments of recognition rarely show up in their representational function. Instead, what gently emerges are the abstract relationships between the parts that remain absent—a kind of familiar unseen.

—Erika Landström

Galerie Gisela Capitain is pleased to announce the first solo exhibition of artist Lukas Quietzsch (b. 1985 Lichtenstein, Germany) at the gallery. Lukas Quietzsch has exhibited at Ramiken, New York in 2023 and 2022, Kunstverein Freiburg in 2022 and 2017, and at Schiefe Zähne, Berlin in 2020 and 2017.