

Galerie Mezzanin
Karin Handlbauer
63, rue des Maraîchers
CH -1205 Geneva
T +41 22 328 38 02
geneva@galeriemezzanin.com
www.galeriemezzanin.com

Maureen Kaegi, Martin Kippenberger, Seth Price, Stephen Prina, Richard Smith
As He Remembered It...
Curated by Samuel Gross

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As can imply the title of this exhibition borrowed from Stephen Prina, perhaps we can consider painting since pop art only as a memory, a delightfully outdated vehicle with multiplied images, the painting caking almost paradoxically its field, thanks to various reproduction techniques, an extensive history of forms. Thus, if the artist's works presented here, after having been devised for his exhibition at the Secession in Vienna, are furniture items, they are mainly monochrome structures. These architectural fragments, reconstructed from documents on two houses built by R. M. Schindler in Los Angeles – no longer existing –, painted in pink, enter with covering in the field of painting. Here everyone can read references to this modernity with so formal a rationalism.

The work of Richard Smith arises at a crossroads. Since the 60s, the artist noted the unnecessary continuation of a model that would allow us to read on the one hand a cold abstract history and on the other a sensitive figurative perception. With the use of fragments, his works seek a free space in which painting could prove in all its possible fluids and constituents. This exhibition offers us the rare opportunity to see two great works of the 70s, in which the artist does not hesitate to open the stretchers, to assemble them, to superimpose them in order to find an available area for a simple and radical geometric pattern.

There is no need here to come back to the extreme pop impertinence that has been reactivated by Martin Kippenberger, disregarding all limits in a playful and restless flow of images. However, the work chosen for this exhibition reminds us that the German artist was considering painting as a form of native language, the one we can never reduce, nor forget.

The patterns that we distinguish in silhouette, in the two great works of Seth Price, play with our shared memories of adolescence, reproducing one of these paternalistic gestures that should mark a transmission, as futile as it can be. These actions seem to suggest themselves as one of the metaphors of the practice of painting. For if several times this medium's death was announced, it is clear that numerous are those who still want to struggle today with an almost adolescent energy in the margins of the sometimes heavy and numbed history. This dull and constant energy allows Maureen Kaegi to mingle shy restraint and furious wonder in her series of paintings and drawings, without fear of melting into the decorative.

Perhaps, it is reassuring that the title sentence is enunciated in the past, allowing time to dissolve memories as much as good manners in a effervescing visual bubbling from which everyone can draw.

Samuel Gross