

# CHRISTINA ZURFLUH

## PAINTINGGHOSTS

opening, 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2006, 7 p.m.

duration of the exhibition, 13<sup>th</sup> of September until 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2006

It was always Christina Zurfluh's intention to analyse the problems of painting and sculpture in her pictures. Since the beginning of her career the artist is not only interested in settling her work in a media specific context but to show the borders and the overlaps between the different fields. The use of different procedures in her work has disarrangement and exceedence as a result. In her earlier pictures one picture is applied over the other to develop a kind of rough piece like a stone or a piece of wood waiting to be sculpturally worked on. This rough piece has a complex inner life becoming a sumation of its pictures. Therefore in the end not a sculpture but again a picture is developed by bringing out and forming the inner life with sculptural means. This strategy seems to be the opposite of the intension of modern abstraction, namely to free the painting of its materialistic dimension. Passing across the materiality of sculpture Zurfluh facilitates the concentration to basic attributes of painting. By making the one mean explicit the other one can be seen more clearly.

No simple reduction, no intension to reach any kind of purity or autonomy but a clearly structured opposition of different aspects can be found within the work. The attraction of Zurfluh's work lies within the possibility to move between the oppositions. Vice versa a sculpture which is made of wadded sticky tapes and pieces of canvas refers to painting not only to experience the outer piece but also the inner, hidden layers. The installation art as such aims to abolish limitations between space and object. Zurfluh does not intend to abolish anything but to examine and push forward the discours of painting and sculptural art. Always showing this with means of the other type of media. The latest works show the already mentioned strategies being abstracted to a higher level. The pictures are not completely fragmented and torn but can be described as monocromatic layers with differently coloured figures placed on top or underneath the layer. Soft geometrical figures associated with the minimal paintings of the 60ies and 70ies seem to appear in the monochrome parts of the paintings. That's how Zurfluh brings a historical moment into her work, emphasizing her position in art once again, through which she also manages to take her artistic work to a new complex level.

Today minimalism is linked to the final crisis brought up by the phantasies of American Modernism which aimed to create abstraction of the image beyond materiality and defined sculpture atonomous to space. What was basically intended by minimalism has become contradictory to its targets.

Carl Andre's description of the stripes in Stella's paintings as "trails of the brush" shows how the discours of materiality in minimalism has become obsolet. This is compareable to the ongoing debate of theatricity. Zurfluh's work disarranges aspects like the minimalistic original dominated by strong and high-contrast circles. But she uses elements like vanishing circles to build a monocromatic layer. Their singularity is no longer definable. As a result the autonomous character seems to be strengthened once again. Different references to the history of painting, abstraction and gesture can be found within the style of collage and the multicoloured parts of the pictures. What was a synchronical tension of materiality and thought between sculpture and painting in the earlier pictures is being extended by a historical dimension already consisting as an established part of our perception. Here the historical paraphrase and the artistic technique melt together in a unique way. Within the latest sculptural work we do not find paraphrases but the form and the material seem classical. In this case the sculptural material is not used in context to any other media. The tension created by Christina Zurfluh again effects the materiality. Like liquid paint pasty strings are laid around the sculpture and away from them. The apparently prototypistic forms are not modelled or carved man-made, in this case Zurfluh has transferred the well known drip painting effect into another form of media. This process can be seen as complementary proportional to the tearing and razing of pictures. The paintings are fermented by hammer and cisel whereas liquid fluids of colour are used for the sculptures.

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