

The American artist Stephen Prina (born 1954 Galesburg, Illinois) works in various media and frequently combines painting, sculpture and music in large scale installations. His work ranges over a complex network of associations and references which, as an observer, you can neither completely decipher – nor are you supposed to. Rather, he creates works which are mobile in form and meaning integrating time and place into their appearance. You could describe Prina as a post-conceptual artist, who combines the strictly cognitive approach of conceptual art with expressive aspects. Prina describes himself simply as a “painter“.

The Kleve Kurhaus Museum is delighted to present Pina's new project, *galesburg, illinois+* and with the support of previous works and a series, which has emerged especially for Kleve, to place it in the context of the collection. For the first time, the three room-size installations, *The Second Sentence of Everything I Read Is You*, will be shown together. Described as a so-called, “mini-Broadway-musical-on the road or circus“, all components are stacked in transport crates, which in the exhibition rooms are conveniently called into use as seating benches: stereo, loudspeakers, cushions, stencil plates for the writing on the walls and carpet tiles. The installation rooms deliberately give the impression of a makeshift arrangement. They are not fully painted. Cables and lighting are left visible and precarious looking ceilings and walls are used. Prina resists the idea of a fully realised work. Rather, every presentation is integrated to become a part of the whole. The carpet tiles are not cleaned, so the wear on them by the visitors is seen clearly. In the end, despite various aids, the work will not fit into the available space, because the structure of it was made to suit the architecture where the first installation took place. As it is impossible to find a space with the same dimensions a second time, there is also a critique of site-specific art involved, which is intended to be critical of the institution and yet still fits in perfectly to the given conditions.

On the occasion of the exhibition, a new series of works in marble titled *The Kleve Marbles* will be created especially for the Museum Kurhaus Kleve. It consists of a total of 19 marble plates, which will be painted with black Indian ink and are connected with Robert Ryman's work. Both Ryman and Prina work as musicians and in this series Prina explores the idea of a rhythmic application of paint that involves the body.

The project *galesburg, illinois+*, which is a collaboration with the Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen, takes as its starting point Prina's town of his birth, Galesburg, a small town in the Mid-West. the place is neither depicted nor described in the classical sense,, but more alluded to in terms of historical, political, cultural and personal references. These range from Abraham Lincoln to Dorothea Tanning to John Cage.

The project employs interior objects like books, book ends, display cabinets and memorabilia as well as classic art objects such as photography. One aspect, which runs through the entire exhibition, is the Harbor Lights Supper Club, a local bar in which Prina himself regularly performed with the band Jeannie and the Aladdins. The motif was transferred to a high quality fabric pattern, to the artist's specifications, in St. Gallen, an international centre for haute couture, which was the first stage of this exhibition. The resulting fabric is used by Prina for all display elements in the exhibition such as vitrines and tables as well as the lining of the artist's suit. Not least, the exhibition *galesburg, illinois*+ continues the lifelong projects of the *Exquisite Corpse: The Complete Paintings of Manet* (1988–today) as well as the series *Blinds*.

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