

Stiege 13

Edgar Lessig

I thought I wanted to be there, but I wasn't sure

15 October 2021 – 5 November 2021

(engl.)

Downstairs:

I thought I wanted to be there, but I wasn't sure (Poster), 2021

toner, paper, 2 staples

29,7 x 42 cm

Edition of 35 (+3 AP)

Upstairs:

I thought I wanted to be there, but I wasn't sure (Chairs), 2021

72 chairs, each individually marked

dimensions variable

I thought I wanted to be there, but I wasn't sure

Going there.

The staff of Edgar Lessig's photographic work looks somewhat uncomfortable. Five people on a sofa, side by side, but each to themselves. Five people that don't feel quite at ease, but can't resolve to leave either. Instinctively, one has to think of the final dialogue of *Waiting for Godot*:

- Well, shall we go?

- Yes, let's go.

[They do not move].

Possibly.

At first glance, it seems like someone wanted to make space here. Blue chairs have been stacked neatly and moved towards the walls. But still, they dominate the room. Their order is as cool as it is fascinating. Clearly structured units inviting to be taken apart again.

Edgar Lessig's installation is as minimalist as it is concrete: the room looks like a found situation, the space-saving chairs like readymades. Yet each of the 72 molded shells is imprinted with a number; each specimen becomes unique, the industrial chair an edition, the stack has a potential of dispersion.

Hardly any piece of furniture is as anthropomorphic as the chair: legs, seat, backrest address the individual human body. The stackable chair, however, calls for the collective. The chairs seem to be waiting for their next use. The viewer oscillates between a formalistic observation and the playing out of possible constellations; between the pleasure of perfectly fitting shells and frames and the imagination of different social situations. Plastic blue or longing blue, Yves Klein or the Blue Flower, working group or silence, adaptation or participation?

In 1965 Joseph Kosuth created an icon of conceptual art with *One and Three Chairs*. Term, image, and object stand side by side: chair, photograph, encyclopedia entry. Edgar Lessig's installation shares with Kosuth and Yves Klein the love for the conceptual. In 1958 the latter opened an exhibition titled *Le Vide* at the Iris Clert Gallery in Paris. 3000 visitors accepted the invitation in search of a 'sensibilité picturale immatérielle'; in the gallery space they found only white walls lit by neon light.

Stiege 13 too appears to have been emptied out. Neon lights, white walls, grey floor. But the longer nothing happens, the more the chairs impose themselves. If there is such a thing as active waiting, then it probably has this very color.

- Jasmin Mersmann