

CK Rhodes

What it ain't, what it is?

December 6, 2013 - February 15, 2014

Opening on Friday, December 6, 2013
7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

This is CK Rhodes' first solo exhibition at Galerie Cinzia Friedlaender. Rhodes works with the medium of painting; his works, however, challenge the limits of painterly representation, and of the painted surface itself. For the works in this show, Rhodes deploys the notion of deprivation, or deprived representation, authoring canvases that offer no focal point, no apparent information, throwing the viewer's gaze across the entire plane. The surfaces themselves are accumulations of layers, of different materials, where the process of gluing and stapling remains transparent. Thus, the relational spaces existing on a single plane are rendered visible—and tangible—through his use of doubling, collage, subtraction and cut-outs. Rhodes' exploration of relational space, an internal space composed of the relations between objects, threads throughout the show, and is alluded to in the form of a recurring rectangular motif.

The work "Untitled (Performance/Audience/Mirror)" occupies the first room. Here, Rhodes blew up a digital image of the now-iconic—though unofficial—photograph documenting Dan Graham's seminal performance from 1975, "Performance/Audience/Mirror". The area in the printed image representing the reflection in the mirror of both artist and audience is the focus of Rhodes' interrogation. While Graham's performance made use of language to invoke theories of (now somewhat outdated) Structural Linguistics, Rhodes' representation seeks to classify elements of space as opposed to elements of language. A small rectangle made of two strips of color appears at the point of intervention and glides the images diagonally unto itself. Holes puncture the image, revealing a mirror underneath, though the reflection is obfuscated here and there, giving the mirrored space an ambiguous irregularity, and confounding opacity. (Interestingly, in linguistics, the term "opaque context" refers to instances where co-referential expressions cannot be substituted without altering the content of a sentence).

Works in the second room continue this inquiry into internal spaces, now applied, however, to abstractions. The mixed-media paintings oscillate between paintings and sculptures, and reveal surfaces and patterns that are doubled or multiplied, mirrored and conflated. A large, printed paper work shows a black & white, pixelated abstraction that originates from a Mandala painting by John McCracken. The Mandala, a perfectly symmetrical representation in itself, is digitally manipulated, printed out, and manipulated again: while the points of contact of the sheets of paper signify repetitions and shifts within the surface, the cut-outs expose wall-paper that does not exist on the gallery's walls. Rhodes' interest in internal, folded spaces enters the three-dimensional space of the viewer, directing them through the exhibition to a doorway leading into an impossible space. The pattern in which he uses the rectangular shape made of two strips of color seems to echo the Deleuzian distinction between representations (which he regards as mediated) and signs (which are direct), "making movement itself a work, without interpositions; of substituting direct signs for mediate representations". (Gilles Deleuze, *Differenz und Wiederholung*, übers. von Joseph Vogel, München 1992, S. 24.)

Text: Hili Perlson