

Shadow/Existence

26 June – 5 September 2009

Curated by Rebecca Blum & Jennifer Bork

Jonathan Bragdon (USA *1944)

During the creative process, the artist engages in a singular dialogue with his surroundings. He describes it as a “free fall” in which the discernable spatial arrangement of things and their objective denotation gradually fall apart. The outer world becomes nothing but a loose network of possibilities that are ordered anew during the lengthy drawing process. Not only the act of drawing but also its results create a balance between representation and abstraction that is evident on levels of production as well as reception. “It is as if the existence of the landscape and myself come into balance [...]” says the artist.

Tom Chamberlain (GB *1973)

Tom Chamberlain’s works are characterized by the methodical accumulation of marks of an almost mechanical precision that offer structure but belie the common experience of perception. They represent the process of becoming, ideally functioning as a projection screen for the viewer’s imagination. His individual, decisive units of distinct form and colors congeal into the mere suggestion of depiction and, in their subtlety, are at constant risk of falling into atrophy.

David Schutter (USA *1974)

Almost ghostlike are David Schutter’s paintings, which he himself calls *afterpaintings*. The works shown here are based on Jacob Isaacs van Ruisdael’s painting *Haarlem Seen from the Northwest Dunes* (ca. 1670 - 75). At first Schutter studied the work directly in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin during a fellowship in 2007. Afterwards, by distancing himself to the work in terms of space and time in his studio, he was able to question the results of this first phase. The outcome is neither remembrance nor repetition but the painter’s engagement with van Ruisdael’s working method. The movement and palette of the *afterpaintings* are reminiscent of the painterly approach of the Dutch landscape artist. These are taken up in only the subtlest of manners and transformed into Schutter’s highly contemporary work. In this way, David Schutter inscribes Baroque painting into the present day and proves that the apparent limitations of a linear concept of time are actually much more permeable than expected.

Neil Gall (GB *1967)

Neil Gall plays with formal aspects of space and perception. His compositions bring together chaotic shreds of once-complete objects—paintings, everyday items, sculpture—in a push-pull of perspectives. These still-lives are characterized by a multi-layered complexity that eventually swings from hyperrealism to its paradoxical breakdown into an abstraction laced with surrealism. The formal ambivalence of Gall’s work positions it on the cusp of the surge of figurative painting of recent years, but its focus on the material surface distances it from this group in its delicate proximity to abstraction.

Jorinde Voigt (D *1977)

Jorinde Voigt’s drawings chart visual experiences and invisible structures and rhythms of the world around us. Natural and social processes follow their own order while remaining hidden to the observer. She addresses these themes in her drawings from various points of view and combines music and emotions with mathematics, rhythm with algorithm, rigorous order with aesthetic gracefulness.

Nico Glaenzel (D *1973)

Affektenraum presents the four fundamental emotions—fear, anger, sadness, and excess—using an electro-processed sound condensate composed according to the Baroque’s *Affekt* theory of music. Four sound spaces corresponding to the four emotions are conveyed to the listener through textile-covered earphones. The work addresses the relationship between synthetics, organics, and outer and inner space as well as questioning illusion, reality, and the aesthetics and limitations of organizing principles.

“I believe that music, in its very nature, is unable to ‘express’ something, whatever that might be: a feeling, an attitude, a psychological condition, a natural phenomenon, or the like. ‘Expression’ has never been an imminent characteristic of music, and in no way is its right to exist dependent on its ‘expression.’ Whenever music seems to express something—as is usually the case—this is illusion and not reality. (...) The phenomenon of music is there for the specific purpose of creating order among things and most of all an order among people and time.”

- Igor Stravinsky

ScheiblerMitte

Öyvind Fahlström (S *1928 - 1976)

Öyvind Fahlström's *Sketch for a World Map* simplifies the adaptation of global political structures by using cartographical principles to facilitate the comprehension of complex structures. The artist addresses the apparent irreconcilability of opposites, amalgamates his own text, comics, and scientific cartography to achieve an acceptance of, even a pleasure in, truly gruesome content. The depictions of exploitation, political persecution, and misuse of power often appeared in large editions, in one case as an insert in a leftist newspaper and as a puzzle. Both forms are exemplary of Fahlström's playful challenge to the viewer to participate and interact as well as his democratic approach to art.

Mark Lombardi (USA 1951 - 2000)

Mark Lombardi radicalizes Fahlström's methodical approach. His organigrams make comprehensible the complex network of worldwide structures of power, corruption, and surveillance. The use of a straightforward chart exposes the Janus-headed existence of his chosen subject matter—the Mafia, the secret service, or financial scandals. The form enables the viewer to penetrate and follow intricate workings of these global networks. Nevertheless, Lombardi's clarifying drawings do not create a feeling of security but just the opposite: fear and powerlessness. The FBI had supposedly long been observing the artist when he was found hanged in his studio in 2000.

Alexander Schellow (D *1974)

Alexander Schellow's works *storyboards* and *spots* combine subjective aspects and objective parameters of perception. Human memory and its own selective perception create the foundation for the serial works, which are often conceived as long-term projects. The process is reminiscent of an experimental procedure with specifically determined phases and material as well as the use of existent structures such as portrait conventions or a computer program with which he turns his drawings into film sequences. Positioned between subconscious connections and realization, the works illuminate the appearance and existence of oneself. Our memories often take nebulous or vague form, yet constitute our personality and perception of ourselves. The exploration of principles of memory, which are intangible and cannot claim to be true, is of particular interest here.

Michael Wutz (D *1979)

Michael Wutz's etching *Limbus Park* refers to a strict classification of individual circles of Hell, as described in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, that represent an unalterable order with definite laws. At first glance, the artist has dissolved these into teeming chaos. On second glance, the work reveals a colored structure and a thread of dynamic movement and counter-movement. A rollercoaster rolls up and down through large areas of the picture space, while falling and jumping motions are observable as well. These movements turn up again in his animated film of colored sections of the etching that takes the observer on a fast-paced ride through Limbus Park. Michael Wutz references the carnival as an anarchistic space for amusement within the public space. The apparently lawless state essential for the functioning of a carnival is crossed with the infernal scenario's depictions of excess, squandering, libidinal behavior, and lust. Michael Wutz thus creates a hybrid space that simultaneously evokes desire and disgust. In addition, *Limbus Park* heightens the ambivalence inherent in the Christian notion of Hell: Limbus is a part of Hell without any or much suffering. In this sense, it is the abode for souls that—through no fault of their own—have been shut out of Heaven and thus are clearly caught between moral categories of justice and injustice, good and evil. The *Limbus* was never defined as part of the official church doctrine. Nevertheless, it poses an uncomfortable question regarding the Christian order.

Speer I deals with the design of Albert Speer and Adolf Hitler for the "Welthauptstadt Germania." Wutz's depiction of these plans oscillates between ghost town and utopia.