

Artforum, 10/2014

Noemi Smolik: „Carolin Eidner“

print

## ARTFORUM

COLOGNE

**Carolin Eidner**

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*Verticality as the Speed of Horizon* (all works cited, 2014) is the title of one of the pieces in Carolin Eidner's debut gallery show, "Meanwhile 'Me'." The artist has only just finished her studies at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, where Rosemarie Trockel was among her teachers, and, like the title of the exhibition, *Verticality as the Speed of Horizon* seems to be a kind of programmatic statement. Not necessarily on the level of content, though—what might verticality as the speed of horizon mean? How could verticality be any such thing when it is the opposite of horizontality? And how we to imagine a speed of the horizon, which is usually distinguished by its static quality?



View of "Carolin Eidner," 2014.  
From left: *Ignorance towards What Really Is*, 2014; *Verticality as the Speed of Horizon*, 2014; *Twilight Demand*, 2014.

That's just it: It's not the title's perceived meaning but rather the particular approach manifested by it that sets the artist's work apart. Eidner is one of a generation of what we might call post-post-Conceptual artists who use language in associative fashion, prefer material structures and objects over explicit content, and flout ideology in favor of ambivalence that is immensely refreshing. To see how this works, consider the piece *Verticality as the Speed of Horizon* designates. An almost translucent cream-colored bar of soap with numbers engraved in it is mounted directly on the gallery's wall in an upright position. Its counterpart, also set upright but a little higher up, is a block ordinary black modeling clay. Forming a "picture," the two are framed by simple wooden slats—not even of uniform width—mounted on the wall with almost demonstrative casualness. Taken together with this form and materials, the title positively invites wide-ranging associations.

Physical appearance on the one hand, the Conceptual aspect on the other, and how the two inform each other: These are Eidner's great concerns, as may be observed in her paintings no less than in her sculptures. She slathered several layers of white plaster on canvas to make a picture—actually, more like an object—that exudes the muteness and fragility of death mask. Then she painted a luminous abstract watercolor on the unevenly structured surface. The result is *Rudimental Grammar of Poiesis (Maniac Casals)*, another clash between physical matter and a prevailing Conceptualism. Again, pay attention to the title. People have associated all sorts of things with the Greek term *poiesis*—including lots of wrong things. In contradistinction to *praxis*, which describes a free activity that is an end itself, *poiesis* designates a doing, such as the craftsman's, in which a product is intended and which can be learned. Hence the title's reference to grammar as a system of rules that the language learner needs to study. And yet a language is not necessarily a means of production, is it? Perhaps of the production of meaning, which, as the title suggests, proceeds maniacally. And what does *Casals* mean? Although it may remind you of a famous cellist, to the artist it meant nothing: She simply made it up. The term lends the whole thing an ambivalence that attests to her subtle sense of humor and even subtler flair for the paradoxical.

—Noemi Smolik  
Translated from German by Gerrit Jackson

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