



Stefan Gritsch
«Cut»
Oct 26 - Dec 21, 2013

It is layers of acrylic paint that Stefan Gritsch applies until they condense to colour skins or solid colour volumes in form of rectangular blocks or rotund objects. After drying Gritsch places a cut directly into the paint object and carves out smaller elements or slices to make new images visible. A *cut* is the place where the boundary between the internal and the external sphere appears, where the back and the front of things come in sight. Where is it that skin touches the external world, where does the inner world show up to its exterior surroundings?

To explore the inside of his paint objects Gritsch invades the area of the unseen, he cuts, saws, sticks, and cuts again. Thus he repeats a never-ending process. His examination especially focusses on the phenomenon of (colour-)skin in terms of a surface, which functions both as the vessel and the outmost coating of any volume. All the more the artist is interested in what could be behind such a surface. Accordingly, both the blue and the white painting with the title «Inversion» reveal the reverse sides of colour skins, consisting of six acrylic layers, which then have been fixed on the canvas likewise with acrylic paint. The paintings on canvas as well as the three-dimensional structures are decidedly related to Radical Painting and the interrogation of painting itself. Regarding this, a clear definition declaring the paint objects to be images or sculptures remains undecided.

The artist reworks his pieces, that is, he takes already existing objects as a starting point for new creations. His bodies of acrylic paint represent an interim result arising from a kind of ritual, which nevertheless leads to something different every time. Gritsch walks alongside the emerging pictures like a reader who goes through a text, whereby the word text originates from the Latin word «texere», meaning «to weave». Here however, what constitutes the texture, the cloth, the tissue, is not the verbal but the visual realm. Considering that Gritsch has installed a «floor image» on the ground of the exhibition space by composing a temporary still life of round and rectangular structures it becomes strikingly clear, that by moving along the images at our feet we concretely proceed to non-linguistic terrain.

Potentially, there would be thousands of possible cuts, thousands of pictures. Only one of them showing up at the interface, the crucial point and central subject matter in Gritsch's work. What lies behind the visible phenomena? Is there only emptiness, only contingency to find, which then carries out a completely arbitrary posing among one of these thousands of kinds of possibilities just mentioned? Though there might exist an infinite set of options in fine art, real life in fact forces, or - one might say - offers us freedom, to make a decision, to have the choice, which we then hold against the arbitrary; (not to choose means to stay a fragment, as the character in the novel by Robert Musil «The Man Without Qualities», mentioned in an essay by Sibylle Omlin discussing Gritsch's work).

Consequently, at least artist and viewer have to make decisions all the time about which aspect is to be emphasized: When crossing the gallery space and passing the still life on the ground the spectator has to act through tying himself down to one perspective or maximally several kinds of angles from which to look upon the images. By striding up and down the linear patterns and the surface structures of the reliefs he focusses on one issue for a certain moment of time, although an infinite number of viewpoints on Gritsch's artwork would be possible. Instead, art is able to take the unthinkable liberty to utter no ultimate statement at all, something we cannot really imagine though at this point actually seeing it with our very eyes.

Janne Noll