



Chalet5 Wälchli & Reichlin
«An Eye on Two Worlds»
Oct 29, 2016 until Jan 7, 2017

Karin Wälchli and Guido Reichlin have been working together as an artist-duo under the name of Chalet5 since 1995. A multifaceted body of works in a variety of media has emerged from this collaboration ever since. Whereas their focus laid primarily on installations and collage-like rendered photographs, Chalet 5 have shifted their attention to painting in the most recent time. The intellectual and creative breeding ground, from which they filter inspiration for their artistic practice, has overall remained the same: Their paintings and objects oftentimes consist of ornamental patterns and structures from diverse cultures, arranged partly in overlapping, transparent layers or in juxtaposition, in order to enable a re-examination of one's perception of the 'other' through the assumption of a new perspective.

In the current exhibition at the Gallery Mark Müller in Zurich, Chalet5 have a series of their new paintings on show. The exhibition title seems programmatic: A new visual universe unfolds itself before our eyes. What - and first of all - how do we see? These are paintings that challenge our conventions of seeing and our knowledge of the world. Do we see, what we see, or do we only see what we know, what we recognize? And how do we deal with unknown formations and structures? We are looking at compositions held in a reduced colour palette, in countless gradients of black on a white background.

The paintings irritate because they have neither figurative nor entirely abstract features. It seems that we are dealing with hybrid formations, carrying both elements from abstract and figurative pictorial worlds. From a distance, it seems like one could detect at least some tactile-material certainties. Several fragments appear almost photorealistic, graphically accurate and they bring something vegetable-organic or minerally grown to mind, something anthropomorphic-corporal, a liquid flow, industrially crafted or physically tangible, linked together over countless foldings. When standing up-close to the painting, the impression of a spatial, three-dimensional voluminosity gained from a distance, dissolves into complete flatness and only-just applied coats of paint. The figure-ground-relationship and the notion of a rudimentarily existing, three-dimensional perspective, are turned on their heads.

The white ground seems to lie on the same level as the painting. The viewer is forced to recollect and reposition him- or herself, since everything he/she thought she knew about sensual and tactile qualities, material surface qualities or gravity, ceases to function in front of these paintings.

The paintings by Chalet5 activate both an associative way of seeing and the observer's imagination. Thus, the artists address an independent viewer, who is willing to engage with a new, unfamiliar world of imagery. With their completely artificial paintings, Wälchli & Reichlin question our ways of perceiving our diversely image-informed world, and also subliminally broach the issue to the consequences, which may emerge from a solely consuming way of seeing, after a critically-differentiated way of seeing the world has been annihilated.

Dr. Invar-Torre Hollaus - Basel, im Dezember 2016