

Rhizome
seven online
exhibitions

3/7 The Domestic
April 16–22, 2020

Capitain Petzel
Berlin

Node 3/7 The Domestic

For the third node of the Rhizome online exhibitions, Capitain Petzel presents a selection of works which revolve around the theme of the domestic, either through literal representations of household objects, conceptual allusions to the dwelling, or reflections on architectonic practices.

Barbara Bloom's contribution is from her series *Semblance of a House*, which consists of works all referring to people who could not possibly be in the same room together, culminating in what can be understood as an imaginary salon. At a square table, a meeting takes place between Nefertiti, Jesus, Émile Zola, and Amy Winehouse. Under the table's glass top is a collection of playthings mostly based on Jewish history and iconography: among others, a board from the game of the Dreyfus Affair and Truth, several ancient game pieces, a deck of cards, and another playing card made from a desecrated Torah scroll. Bloom understands these objects as placeholders for thoughts. Unlike in classic conceptual art, here it is not the ideas that trigger associations, but the objects.

Isabella Ducrot is known for her devoted use of woven cloth as the founding material of her paintings. In this node of the Rhizome, she depicts a tea set on her quintessential textile pattern, the checkered cloth. The objects chosen by Ducrot in her work belong to a scenic design of interiors; "raised to the rank of protagonists, they pass from being present to a new presence, and reveal their beauty, because they have been stolen from memory," she explains.

Rodney McMillian explores the complicated relationship between history and contemporary culture, not only as they are expressed in American politics, but also as they manifest in American modernist art traditions. His contribution to the third node of the Rhizome consists of a painting on a blanket, which in its materiality points to the shared spaces in which the textile was made and its value as a personal object which may have been passed across generations, given as a gift or simply purchased from a store. His stunning late work reflects on the different systems of exchange that domestic objects can exist in, and their relation to the histories they evoke, whether personal, national or art historical.

Peter Piller is known, above all, for his vast archive of found newspaper photographs. Informed by his perceptive observations and subtle sense of humor, this archive is constantly and meticulously rearranged, creating new associative formations that offer novel perspectives on the activities and rituals of daily life. *Schlafende Häuser 1 (Sleeping Houses 1)* belongs to his expansive *Von Erde schöner* series that offers surprising insights into private life in small German towns and suburbs. The collection of images, sourced from a 1980s archive of aerial photographs of single-family homes, was subsequently curated by Piller into intriguing narratives. The aerial perspective allows the viewer to become an unseen observer of the residents' domestic rituals searching for traces of the inhabitants and their singular stories, raising questions about their respective domestic lives — who lives there and why? What happens inside?

Stephen Prina's free standing dressing room from the series *As He Remembered It* is based on built-ins from two houses built by the Viennese architect R.M. Schindler in LA in the 1940s and later demolished. Using historical plans and photographs, Prina made copies of this unit furniture, painting it in a very bright pink — *Pantone Honeysuckle 2011 Color of the Year*. The work is linked to an anecdote that the artist recalls as follows: "Sometime in the early-to-mid 1980s, Chris Williams and I found ourselves on La Brea Avenue in Los Angeles late one night. From across the street, we could see a spotlighted, pink object showcased in a storefront window, but, from our vantage point, we could not identify it. We crossed the street to gain a closer look. Conveniently, a label describing the object as a piece of furniture by R. M. Schindler was on display. Clearly, this desk that had once been built-in had been pried out of its surroundings with the attempt to render it freestanding. However, it appeared to us as an amputated limb."

Monika Sosnowska is internationally known for her architectural sculptures and installations. The artist transforms familiar architectural elements into idiosyncratic works that challenge the viewer to perceive these well-known structures more attentively and sensitively. Her contribution to this node of the Rhizome, *Stairs*, is inspired by one of her trips to Dhaka, Bangladesh. Impressed by the sheer amount of sprawling steel bars growing out of concrete bases, proliferating power cables winding around buildings, and the apparent promise of continuous construction throughout the city, Sosnowska started envisioning the subjects as "urban flowers". Her *Stairs* relate to the domestic sphere, purely and elegantly they appear as flowers in a vase.

The themes in **Christopher Williams'** works reflect the artist's fascination with obsolescence and the connection between photographs and the very objects they document. In this particular work Williams addresses the domestic by bringing to light not only the practicality but perhaps more importantly the charm of a simple household object;

"Beauty, happiness at ground level. A carpet of pure new wool embellishes everything that it touches. If you have never seen your furniture on a beautiful carpet, then you have never seen it. If you have never walked barefoot, in your house, on the softness of wool, then you are ignoring a great pleasure. Because a good carpet, of true, vibrant, natural wool, makes life more beautiful. (...)"