

GALERIE NÄCHST ST. STEPHAN ROSEMARIE SCHWARZWÄLDER

MANFRED PERNICE

dellbrück
2023

26 JAN – 25 MAR

Opening: Thursday, January 26, 2023, 6 p.m.
Vienna 1, Domgasse 6

dellbrück takes the form of an installation occupying (the lower part of) a space that can only be fathomed by the gaze of beholders. The sculptural objects would love to control everything, but because of technical flaws, they are incapacitated, so they can only stand around. Meanwhile, a damaged bridge (it has a dent) can only be used to a limited extent (*dellbrück* literally means “a bridge with a dent”). Although it is in effect destroyed, it still connects two points and is able to close the gap between them.

Sometimes the objects are combined with articles of daily use, photocopies, or newspaper clippings, while evoking memories of places, creating references to socio-historical contexts, or triggering a chain of associations that remain subjective and cannot be interpreted clearly. They adhere to tried and true systems of order that are articulated in specific series, always following the principle of what could be called recombability. As the spatial contextualization of history, they refer to site-specific aspects and discover new ways to approach the complexity of our lived reality through incidental or even rejected phenomena. Although this network of mutual references may appear organized, it incorporates deliberate breaking points.

What we see are flat, round objects placed on the floor. They are equipped with sensors, but these do not work. The sculptures want to define their own position in the room as well as our standpoint in relation to them, but their own infrastructure causes them to fail, and the exhibition ends one meter above the floor. It is a flat, horizontal, installation – an island-like three-dimensional shape – perhaps the sculptural echo of a suburb of Cologne, the significance of which remains unclear in this context. There is a hint of something dysfunctional that lets the objects remain in a state of apparent self-sufficiency that could also indicate a new exploration of their relationship to their surroundings.

Manfred Pernice's sculptures always refer to a recurring and finely attuned vocabulary of forms that presents itself in the configurations that are reiterated in turn. Spatially structured, compact, three-dimensional shapes are sometimes lined up in a row, or they are organized to constitute a barricade. In each case, they are arranged to form a kind of installation, while unfolding open systems of reference that sound out our present time and its state through constellations that seem to capture a moment. These “can-shaped” or container-like works oscillate between sculptural and architectural forms and could be emblematic models of larger systems. The spatial objects consist of simple building materials and emanate the feeling of being preliminary, something which corresponds to their potential model-like character. Although they formulate the latter in a stable form, they insist that their appearance is but one possible configuration out of many.

Dellbrück is the name of a district of Cologne, but it is unclear in what way the title of this exhibition refers to this location. Although the name appears descriptive, the image it evokes does not get us very far, and we are left guessing what it has to do with a bridge that has a dent in it and what role the Rhine River might play.

Vanessa Joan

Müller

Manfred Pernice, born 1963 in Hildesheim, lives and works in Berlin.

From 2004 to 2009 he was a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, in 2012 he became a professor for sculpture at the University of Fine Arts in Berlin.

Solo exhibitions (selection) LLS Paleis, Antwerp (2021); Kunstfenster des Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft im BDI e.V., Haus der Deutschen Wirtschaft, Berlin (2017); Kunstmuseum St. Gallen (2016); Institut d'Art Contemporain Villeurbanne (2013); Haus der Kunst, Munich (2013); SMAK, Ghent (2011); n.b.k. Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin (2011); DCA Dundee Contemporary Arts (2011); Secession, Vienna (2010); Modern Art Oxford (2010); CEAAC Centre Européen d'Actions Artistiques, Strasbourg (2010); Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg (2010); Neues Museum, Nuremberg (2008); Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2008); Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2003); Sprengel Museum, Hanover (2001); Portikus, Frankfurt/Main (2000); Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich (2000); and Kabinett für aktuelle Kunst, Bremerhaven (1997).

Manfred Pernice was represented at the Bienal de São Paulo (2011), the Skulptur Projekte Münster (2007), the Bienal de Sevilla (2006), the Documenta XI in Kassel (2002), the Venice Biennale (2001 and 2003), the Manifesta 3 in Ljubljana (2002), the Berlin Biennale (1998), and the Biennale de Lyon (1997).