

KÖNIG GALERIE

ANSELM REYLE | PARADISE

KÖNIG GALERIE | 9 JUNE – 22 JULY 2023

The center of Anselm Reyle's exhibition PARADISE (all works UNTITLED, 2023) is formed by three free-standing, large-scale stainless steel sculptures. Consisting of a group of two and a single piece, they dominate the space with a height of almost six meters respectively. Despite their enormous presence, these slender vertical formats are paradoxically laden with a certain degree of invisibility: polished to a mirror finish, the physicality of the steel appears to dissolve in the surrounding space, disappearing into pure reflection. It is above all the distortions and deformations caused by irregular, softly running undulations of the surface, that anchor the eye in a manner both irritating and fascinating. For on the one hand, the sculptures resonate with the full force required to forge them as steel (Reyle had deformations precisely planned using heavy construction equipment), while on the other hand they also appear almost immaterial in the spatial-visual experience they engender. This setting is a thoroughly sacred one, Reyle consciously formulating a powerful reflection on the exhibition context of the Church of St. Agnes and its Brutalist architecture. But in place of pure sanctity, Reyle substitutes a kind of pathos of ambivalence or certain devotion to emptiness, and so invites altogether varied readings.

Reyle developed these sculptures, among other works, based on his foil paintings and their logic of interlocking reflections, which means they can also be read as gigantic foil strips standing freely in space. Alongside these objects, there are also new foil pictures on display in PARADISE. The characteristic silver foil, originally an everyday material distant from art and a challenge to habits of taste, was first discovered by Reyle in the late 1990s in the window of a Berlin decoration store — one of many such found objects that form the basis of much of his work. He began to experiment with the foil and today it is almost an omnipresent feature in his work in several modulations and combinations. Early on, it was a matter of using "glossy stuff" of all things to translate a gesture of abstract painting into a more sculptural, pictorial space of the fold, which can be seen most recently in the group of LAZY FOILS, in which Reyle drapes somewhat thicker silver foil into flowing wave formations on the canvas. Often in combination with colored transparent Plexiglas boxes, traditionally used as protective museum furniture, Reyle here gives them an independent object character in concert with the paintings. By means of such boxes, he also creates a kind of inverted painting: the Plexiglas filters emit light in various colors, giving the picture/object its hue, which, nonetheless, retains its immateriality as a color of light.

Light plays a central role in Reyle's work: as neon (color), reflection, translucence, and also in photography. The fact that his handling of material becomes more relaxed in the newer works — that he pursues impulses rather than intervening more deeply in modeling — can be seen, among other things, in the LAZY FOILS: extremely opulent, the material is at the same time tense enough to allow itself to be stimulated by its haptic qualities and pliability. Reyle wants to "let material be material more," he says, and this also characterizes the paintings and sculptures in PARADISE.

Reyle also shows works with neon elements, which he arranges in Plexiglas boxes. The pictorial principle of accumulation alludes to practices of the Nouveaux Réalistes, artists like Armand, for example. The lighting elements themselves go back to found objects; Reyle once discovered remnants among glassblowers, and since then has used such material for paintings and installations. In PARADISE he combines abstract-gestural elements with symbols and lettering and arranges them on foil folds in dark-tinted Plexiglas boxes to create multi-layered light paintings. The pink lettering "Paradise" in one of the works gave this exhibition its name.

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EXHIBITIONS

ALLISON ZUCKERMAN
Open Casting
KÖNIG GALERIE
09.06 – 22.07.2023

DAVID ZINK YI
Playing Until Failure
KÖNIG SEOUL
21.05. – 17.06.2023

JOSE DÁVILA
Men Catching Birds
KÖNIG SEOUL
01.07. – 06.08.2023

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Tue – Sat 11 AM – 6 PM

Reyle's photographs form a new series of works: abstract, colorful light compositions, taken at night in urban spaces, which continue central aspects of his work in the photographic medium. With dynamic color gradients, sometimes reminiscent of brush gestures, and sometimes containing legible lettering, this is something akin to gestural painting with a camera, directed entirely at spaces of artificial light, which also characterize Reyle's neon works.

With his series NEUE MALEREI, Reyle comes even closer to the haptics of painting. In these works, he presents a broad vocabulary of forms in a minimalist manner: rough jute ground next to iridescent surfaces, draped foil folding plus roughly squeegeed neon paint, a dripping gradient over impasto paint material, blobs as autographs — almost every one of his stylistic elements is present, legible like a signature, and yet everything fits more freely into the larger whole. On a large format, Reyle thus sets a new tone, introducing depth and natural color, contrasting atmospheres of the archaic with heightened artificiality. In this way he sets dynamics in motion that open up entirely new fields of painting for him.

Jens Asthoff

Anselm Reyle (b. 1970 in Tübingen, Germany) lives and works in Berlin. He studied at the State Academy of Art and Design in Stuttgart and Karlsruhe. Since 2009 the artist has held a position as a professor of Painting/Drawing at the University of Fine Arts in Hamburg.

Anselm Reyle's best-known works include his foil and stripe paintings as well as his sculptures. The characteristic of his artistic work is the use of various found objects that have been removed from their original function, altered visually, and recontextualized. Remnants of consumer society, discarded materials, symbols of urbanity, and industrial change play a central role in his oeuvre.

Anselm Reyle's works have been shown in numerous institutional solo exhibitions, including MoCA Westport, Connecticut, USA (2023), Kunsthalle Vogelmann, Heilbronn, Germany (2022), Aranya Art Centre, Qinhuangdao, China (2020), Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, Germany (2012), the Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin, Germany (2012); The Arken Museum of Modern Art, Ishøj, Denmark (2011), Des Moines Art Center, Iowa, USA (2011), Kunsthalle Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany (2009), and Kunsthalle Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland (2006). Reyle's works are part of numerous private and public collections worldwide, such as Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, France; Pinault Collection, Venice, Italy; Saatchi Gallery, London, UK; Nationalgalerie / Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Germany; Sammlung Boros, Berlin, Germany; Collection Ringier, Zurich, Switzerland; Rubell Family Collection, Miami, USA; Des Moines Art Center, Iowa, USA; Arken Museum of Modern Art, Ishøj, Denmark; Leeum / Samsung Museum of Modern Art, Seoul, Korea; Museo Jumex, Mexico City, Mexico; Essl Museum — Kunst der Gegenwart, Klosterneuburg, Austria; among many others.

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