

GALERIE NÄCHST ST. STEPHAN ROSEMARIE SCHWARZWÄLDER

HEINRICH DUNST
READ/RED

10 NOV 2023 – 13 JAN 2024

Opening: Friday, November 10, 2023, 6 p.m.
Vienna 1, Domgasse 6

One of Sol LeWitt's Sentences on Conceptual Art from 1969 says: "Conceptual artists are mystics rather than rationalists. They leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach."

Heinrich Dunst is interested in taking leaps like these, but he is even more interested in the disruptions that occur in the process: the hard landings when you hit the gaps of logic and rationality – gaps that should be as unknown as possible – in the place where tensions, paradoxes, and ambiguities appear; the unforeseeable discoveries and sites in the, by now, fairly well mapped terrain of the conceptual.

In his current exhibition, Dunst takes a leap in three stages, a triple jump, the first of which begins with the exhibition space. The longer wall on the right of the entrance is immediately involved in the action through two words painted on the surface, "think" and "wall," which inspire beholders to reflect and ask questions. This produces the first moment of tension because two different modes of language are activated: the descriptive and the performative. The denotation and marking of the wall through the corresponding word is mixed with the connotation of the request to think of a wall. What does that make this? A wall that thinks, or a talking wall that wants us to think of a wall?

A possible answer can be found on the opposite side of the room, which is the second stage. The wall made of chipboard leaning against that wall could be the materialization, or the physical translation of our thoughts. What is important is the subjunctive: the imagined wall that could, but does not have to, be; a contingent state of what is not, or not yet, real, the unfinished; an incomplete process that is repeated and emphasized by the wall that someone has begun to paint. As the color advances from the upper left, the linguistic aspect is replaced by the visual. Discursive questions regarding painting emerge on the horizon: Is the wall next to the wall more of a soon-to-be picture? Or is it its support? Or a minimalist object?

The wall oscillates back and forth, analogous to the exhibition room, whose architectural restlessness Dunst uses for his third and final stage in which the hinted-at introduction of the object takes place. The opening on the backside of the wall provides a view of a 3D print that is hanging there: a white, amorphous thing, the form of which is based on a found everyday object that has been scanned – a real thing in a real doubling that has taken a digital detour and that cannot be attributed to anything at all.

Where are we now? The clarity of the three relations – between word and thought, thought and object, and object and object – is deceiving. This is not a tautological circle, like Joseph Kosuth and his famous three versions of a chair: as a word, as an image, and as an object. Rather, this circle should be broken. The translations should and may fail so that we can encounter something new in the process. Incompleteness is the goal. read/red/ready?

Maximilian Geymüller

HEINRICH DUNST was born in 1955 in Hallein, he lives and works in Vienna.

Selected exhibitions: HALLE FÜR KUNST Steiermark, Graz (solo) (2023); Kestner Gesellschaft, Hanover (group) (2023); Belvedere 21, Vienna (group) (2021); Kunstraum Pro Arte, Hallein (solo) (2019); Kunstforum Bank Austria, Vienna (group) (2019); Gallery of Contemporary Art, České Budějovice (solo) (2018); mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna (group) (2018); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (group) (2017); National Gallery Prague, with works by Franz West (solo) (2016); Künstlerhaus Halle für Kunst & Medien, Graz (group) (2016); Belvedere 21, Vienna (group) (2016); Kunsthalle Krems, Krems (group) (2016); Galerie der Stadt Schwaz, Schwaz (solo) (2015); Ludwigforum Aachen, Aachen (group) (2015); Secession, Vienna (solo) (2014).

Solo exhibitions at the Galerie nächst St. Stephan Rosemarie Schwarzwälder, Vienna: 1987, 1991, 1993, 1995, 2013, 2019, and 2023 (Domgasse).

Selected museum and private collections: Belvedere, Vienna; Generali Foundation, Salzburg; Kunsthhaus Bregenz, Bregenz; MAK Museum für angewandte Kunst, Vienna; mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna; Neue Galerie, Graz; Gabi and Wilhelm Schürmann Collection, Herzogenrath; Sigrid and Franz Wojda Collection, Vienna.