

Dirk Stewen

PAPER SIR

Gallery Weekend Berlin, April 26–28, 2013

Opening reception: April 26, 6–9 pm
Exhibition duration: April 26 – June 2013

Dirk Stewen employs photographs in each one of the works on show in his latest exhibition, *PAPER SIR*. They are painted over, converted into negatives and surrounded by abstractions. The artist draws (sometimes quite literally) on his own production in the process, within which the displayed works are merely focal points.

We are presented within his works with points of contact between photography and its "ancestors" of drawing and painting. The images are arranged in groups and in a variety of complementary pairs.

In the main gallery room, such a compilation of papers and whitewashed rods (*Untitled (Akt)*, 2013) competes with a nearly identical twin on the same wall. This arrangement is facing a novel group of images from the ivory-coloured *Soft Corps* series, which Stewen is developing since 2010.

Stewen assembles his works from a collection of materials that has been steadily growing for more than a decade. Apart from a variety of papers, he exclusively uses his own photographs taken in Hamburg and during his travels. The circular confetti-like elements occurring on parts of the surface prove on closer inspection to be like fractals of his own small-format paintings, watercolours, photographs and inks, cut-out from the centre of these works. A network of seams holds them in place and balances them at the same time in search of an equilibrium from within.

If there is something perhaps a little touching about their look, it is because the sense of touch and handling of the materials used is ubiquitous in the works – in the stitched lines piercing the material, the carefully arranged circles and the vintage papers on which traces of delicate tentative contact can be witnessed.

The two new works on paper presented, *Untitled (Schlangen)* and *Untitled (in New York)*, both 2013, relate to his most recent travels in the form of a diary. In these works the painted circular shapes recur, which Stewen has recently used quite often. They appear enlarged at this time in the shape of two simple paper plates with gouache applied onto them, and also in form of a snake-shaped glass vessel, which can be seen on two photographs mounted on top of each other, whose lower part is covered by a piece of painted-over printed matter.

As much as all of these structures are the result of precise calculations, they are also at the same time fragile, almost in danger of collapsing – a quality that features strongly in each of the exhibited works.

We are extremely pleased to announce that Dirk Stewen is currently Artist-in-residence at Villa Aurora in Los Angeles.

Dirk Stewen's work has been featured in numerous international gallery exhibitions. Institutional solo exhibitions include: *Exercises*, Kunstverein Overbeck Gesellschaft, Lübeck (2009); *The Exhibition Formerly Known as Passengers: Dirk Stewen*, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco (2008); *Sugar, Lump Sugar*, Künstlerhaus Stuttgart (2006).

Group shows include, among others: *Liebe ist kälter als das Kapital*, Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz (2013); *Nur hier*, Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn (2013); *Art on Paper 2010: The 41st Exhibition*, The Weatherspoon Art Museum, North Carolina (2012); *Milk Drop Coronet*, Camera Austria, Kunsthaus Graz (2012); *The Anxiety of Photography*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen (2011); *The Library of Babel / In and Out of Place*, 176 Zabudowicz Collection, London (2010); *privat – Wuppertaler Sammler der Gegenwart*, Von der Heydt Museum, Wuppertal (2009); *Pale Carnage*, Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol und Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee (2007); *Formalismus – Moderne Kunst, heute*, Kunstverein in Hamburg (2004).

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