

# Capitain Petzel

MATT MULLICAN

Between

March 11 – April 16, 2016

Opening: Friday, March 11, 6 – 8.30pm

"Matt Mullican's work pursues an equally simple and extraordinary claim. It is to be no more and no less than a model for comprehending and ordering the world. His art encompasses a complex system comprising firm and fleeting elements that stand in firm and fleeting relationships to each other. This means that Mullican's oeuvre exemplarily attempts to get to the root of age-old universal questions regarding our existence with ever new formal means. The foundation of his artistic concept is the examination of the relationships between the reality of things and our perceptions that determine their appearance. In order to get a grip on the universe through organisation it is necessary to develop models that enable us to differentiate and categorise things. Mullican has worked continuously on this project of systemising his subjective world, relying in the process on the methodology of the encyclopaedia and social anthropology. For him, art is located in the realm of the symbolic. He is concerned with the idea that everything has a meaning. Although he is aware that a complete universal collection and depiction is impossible, he continues pursuing this project undeterred. With regard to each individual work, this means that he sees an object or its depiction simultaneously as part of a universe and as a universe in itself.

Mullican's artistic practice is focused – with varying degrees of emphasis over the course of his career – on blocks of works. These are artworks that encompass extremely diverse forms of medial representation on the one hand and performative works on the other in which Mullican regularly works with hypnosis as a speculative temporal form of expanding consciousness. This is supposed for example to make so-called precognitive experiences possible for him, i.e. the perception of future or remote occurrences as well as returning to already experienced life. It goes without saying that these two areas are closely linked, permeating each other in the one or other way, in formal terms as well. The two illustrative models in Mullican's artistic creed are cartography and cosmology. In so-called Charts he describes the splitting of a thing from the objective material reality to its purely subjective idea. Step-by-step they explain the perceptive of reflective connections in which we abstract everyday things and circumstances. In a groundwork of this model, Mullican ultimately narrows our appropriation and orientation in reality down to five existential areas of perception and cognition and assigns symbols and colours to them.

The lowest layer is occupied by the objective. It is symbolised by the basic geometrical shapes of the triangle, circle and square as well as the colour green. It is the level of the purely material state that has no formal meaning and is based on the concept that the whole world consists of material. Above this rises the everyday world, the World Unframed that is full of objects and images whose realities and process are understood to be self-evident. It is visualised by the symbol of the stylised globe and the colour blue. The World Framed is at the centre of the chart. The framed globe and the colour yellow symbolise the sphere of thoughts and ideas that are expressed in art and science. It represents the idea per se, the abstract concept detached from an individual object.

As an instrument of communications, language, whose semiotic system conveys the meaning of things, follows in black and white. It stands in a direct relationship to the objects. The significance they convey is also determined by the subjective experience. The uppermost authority is the level

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of the subjective that stores the concept of things and orders their relationships. It is the authority of the spirit that determines the appropriation of reality. It is symbolised by the head with the brain and the colour red. The subject's thoughts and feelings are found in the red area. They exist detached from the object. This universal model thus comprehends a thing from its unformed, elementary components to the comprehensive perception of its form: "We thus have the object without subject (matter or material) at the bottom of the chart and the subject without object (emotion) at the top. These are the two ends. Both sides are practically impossible but both function in the reality of a chart." (Mullican)"

Ulrich Wilmes, from: Matt Mullican. Im Gespräch / Conversations, DuMont, Cologne, 2011, p. 6f.

Matt Mullican (1951, Santa Monica, California) lives and works in Berlin and New York. He studied at the California Institute of Arts (CalArts), Valencia, in John Baldessari's class and received his degree in 1974. Since the 1970s, Matt Mullican had numerous institutional solo exhibitions, among others at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, at the Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Haus der Kunst, Munich, at the Kunsthalle Mainz and at the Museo Tamayo, Mexico City. Recently, his work was presented in group exhibitions at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, at the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin and the Museum Brandhorst, Munich, among others. Performances and Lectures found place at Culturgest, Lisbon, at the Louvre, Paris and at PRAXES Center, Berlin. A comprehensive solo exhibition opens in Summer 2016 at Kunstmuseum Winterthur, which will travel to the Kunsthalle Vogelmann, Heilbronn. His work is represented in numerous public collections, including Museum Brandhorst, Munich, Ludwig Museum, Cologne, the Centre Pompidou, Paris, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and the MOCA, Los Angeles. In May 2016 an extensive catalog will be published by Ringier. The publication includes about 400 of his rubbings from 1984 - 2015. Since 2009, Matt Mullican is a professor at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg.

Matt Mullican will give a guided tour through the exhibition on Saturday, March 11, at 4 pm.

Press Contact | Capitain Petzel

Elisabeth Pallentin | Telephone: +49 30 240 88130 | Email: [pallentin@capitainpetzel.de](mailto:pallentin@capitainpetzel.de)

Opening hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 11am – 6pm