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## **Daniel Knorr**

*Höhen der Tiefen – Depression Elevations*

January 14, – March 04, 2017

In the Meyer Riegger Gallery in Karlsruhe, the exhibition year begins with Daniel Knorr's solo exhibition *Depression Elevations*. The artist is presenting a variety of work groups in which he appropriates *objets trouvés* in highly different ways that thematize collective memory and the task of acting as a contemporary witness.

For the eponymous series *Depression Elevations* it is depressions or subsidences on pavements or road surfaces that become the *objets trouvés*. Since 2013, Knorr has been "collecting" these unremarkable, inconspicuous features of public space. In a performance-like act reminiscent of Jackson Pollock's manner of working, he throws a generous quantity of the material polyurethane into a pothole. In the next step, the form is filled with this artificial substance – which was originally developed for the creative industry in the United States – and paints are applied. What results is a transparent, diffusely shaped wall object with a shiny, almost still-wet-seeming, smooth surface. Inside the actual, irregular depression in the ground, gaudy colours billow up or rigidify smoke-like.

With their wild and garishly loud coloration the sculptures appear both light and sugar-sweet, but also poisonous and dangerous. In terms of aesthetics and art history, comparisons with American conceptual art and minimalism suggest themselves – to be more exact, comparisons with the Light and Space movement in the California of the 1960s. In Knorr's transparent works, colour and light have a special significance and status, bearing witness to his long-standing study of the works of his American colleagues such as Craig Kaufmann, Peter Alexander, Helen Pashgian and James Turrell.

The objects on the wall are to be understood as a flat screen; in the elevation or depression behind it lies the inner life, the "apparatus". Here, Knorr explains, is created the image that bears our history. Depressions and subsidences beneath normal ground level, the cracking and breaking-up of the firm surface and the absence of repair-work are to be read as signs of the crisis in our society, of economic decline and sheer neglect. The forms of the sculptures enable inferences concerning the road surface and its wear and tear – and are thus contemporary witnesses. Through the repeated pouring of material on the road and the further steps taken in the studio, the work changes and a kind of three-dimensional painting is created that breathes the history of the place in question and continues to stimulate associations with its place of discovery.

In *Depression Elevations* Knorr materializes our day-to-day history and the current situation of our society and politics. He gives them physical form by capturing them between two biopolitical levels, on the one hand the road as the surface of the work and on the other hand the wall as architectural manifestation.

For another work in the exhibition – *Abgetaucht im Osten, Aufgetaucht im Westen [Submerged in the East, Re-surfaced in the West]* – Knorr uses an extremely rusty bicycle, a special *objet trouvé* that hypostasizes the unique history of the city of Berlin. Before the Fall of the Wall, the collapsible bicycle of the East German Mifa brand, type 903, designed in 1983, was thrown into the River Spree in East Berlin and was fished out of the river again after the collapse of communism in 2016. Involuntarily and unrecognized, the bike had travelled from the GDR to the BRD. The material rusted under water, changing its external form. Over the same period of time, political history took its course: the GDR was merged into the BRD, and the partition of Berlin was ended as Germany celebrated Reunification. Subsequently, the bicycle re-surfaced. For years, it served as the logo of the bike repair shop of the Berlin Humboldt-Universität. In *Abgetaucht im Osten, Aufgetaucht im Westen* (2016) Knorr creates a platform for a relic from a former age: its eroding material has worn away like a body of thought and has moved across into the past in solitary seclusion.

Katharina Groth