

KÖNIG GALERIE

PETER DREHER | BEACHCOMBER SHORES

9 MARCH – 21 APRIL 2019
ST. AGNES | CHAPEL
OPENING: 8 MARCH, 6 – 9 PM

What do things do when we are not present?

The succinct title of the exhibition – *Beachcomber Shores* – does not disclose itself immediately. It is the title of the largest painting of its kind by the neorealist painter Peter Dreher. Strictly speaking, this interior consists of 52 individual works each sized 41 x 51 cm. Conjointly they grant a 360° panoramic view that shows his hotel room in San Diego, California.

The viewer looks into quiet, empty, and almost ascetic rooms. Using oil colours, the artist painted the suite's furnishings alla prima onto masonite boards. The smoothness of the masonite surface resembles paper, which allows the paint to be applied seamlessly and thereby creates an illusionistic effect of depth. The painter does not, however, intend the mimicry of a colour photograph. On closer inspection, the apparently consistent surface dissolves into individual islands of paint that reveal the brushwork. The works' startling realism is rooted in Peter Dreher's gift of *absolute vision*. His visual capacities are so acutely and chromatically tuned that he can identify hues in their finest fragmentation and reproduce them on his palette. The colouring exposes reality as directly present.

Peter Dreher chose the USA as his target destination when he was a young man; since the early nineties, he has spent several weeks per year in San Diego. *America's Finest City* means to him what Italy may have meant to the artists of the 19th century—a nostalgic and romanticised Arcadia. For his stay the painter chose an uncomplicated 'surfers' hotel', as his modest studio at home in Sankt Märgen in the Southern Black Forest equally lacked notions of comfort. He self-imposed a material celibacy in order to focus on what was most essential and relevant to him: painting. This humble attitude infuses Beachcomber Shore's tranquil rooms, while simultaneously embodying and representing their creator. The *essence of things* here entails the *essence of the painter*.

Most of the individual paintings could also be stand-alone works. They are partial reminiscences of the artist's great role models: *Chardin*, for example, in the picture displaying a tulip bouquet emerging as a still life. Depicted in a sharply defined and clear-cut way, another example is *Edward Hopper* at the window pane behind which a house facade shows a shadow. As if to commence a silent prayer, the viewer pauses in front of such imagery – the paintings occasion a temporally fluid, transcendent moment.

The impact of *Beachcomber Shores* is encapsulated by the following terms: poetry of the moment, grace, and quiet dignity. Considering that noise, ostentation, and scheming are alien to Dreher, these words also appropriately describe the artist himself.

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OPENING HOURS
TUE – SAT 10AM – 6PM
SUN 12PM – 6PM

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He assimilates and transforms. He turns the simple, the concrete, and the banal into something unique and timeless; he produces a type as well as a topos. Peter Dreher masters the art of omission – he reveals the essential and the indispensable. This clarity acts like a refining process and renders cognition possible. The viewer is granted insight into an intimate situation, which is also illusive, however, as the rooms do not truly disclose themselves. The strictness of uninhabited space communicates a sense of *do-not-come-too-close-to-me*. The rooms know how their secret must be kept.

The *silverbowl* and perry glass still lifes, which are also exhibited, have similar effects on the viewer. With their reflective surfaces they absorb the peripheral world, while simultaneously mirroring it back and onto themselves.

Peter Dreher's first solo exhibition at König Galerie is the result of a wise decision; it makes an unmistakable statement. One does not do justice to the painter by repeatedly narrowing down his oeuvre to his numerically largest group of works: *Day by Day, Good Day*. The sheer number of these works is overwhelming and has caused their high recognition value. One might even wonder why Peter Dreher does not have an entry in the *Guinness Book of Records* with this series. It must sting the artist that many buyers of his paintings are predominantly influenced by these notions of sensation and recognition value. In fact, the painter intended to produce an anti-marketing statement with the series – because the ever-same does not yield the quality of uniqueness that is usually sought after.

This exhibition intends to highlight Peter Dreher's abundant oeuvre. It makes an important contribution to the artist's 'rehabilitation'. It seeks to do justice to the breadth of topics and the plentitude of formal ideas communicated.

Peter Dreher lives and works in Freiburg (Breisgau).

Works by Dreher are held in numerous collections worldwide including Andy Hall Art Collection (USA), Pinault Collection in Venice (Italy), Art Institute Chicago (USA), Columbus Museum of Art in Ohio (USA), Staatsgalerie Stuttgart (Germany), Staatliche Kunsthalle Mannheim (Germany), Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (Germany), Städtische Galerie Rastatt (Germany), Römermuseum Ulm (Germany), Landesmuseum Oldenburg (Germany), Kolumba Diözesanmuseum in Cologne (Germany), Museum Schloß Moyland in Bedburg-Hau (Germany), Mamco – Musée d'art moderne et contemporain in Geneva (Switzerland), Sammlung Würth in Schwäbisch Hall (Germany), Museum Frieder Burda in Baden-Baden (Germany).