

Heike-Karin Föll

metal

05.03. - 06.13.2016

Opening reception: 05.03.2016 7-9 PM

Counterparts/The Empress of the Ephemeral

1.

Within the realm of an imaginary history and stylistics of materials, the general term 'metal,' as it makes up the title of Heike-Karin Foell's show, may trigger associations of heaviness, the inflexible, even of rust. Yet in thinking so one would be wrong, and typically so, i.e. not just in the face of this work. For metal – steel for instance – can also be light, sturdy, hard, yet flexible. Every engineer knows this. In fact, if it weren't for steel's elasticity, i.e. its capacity to bend and swing, every construction that relies on this material for its structural stability would easily collapse when hit by vibrations, quakes, and other shatterings. Metal is also what shines, what repels, what encases, and protects. Constructive and a look, it subtends the high rise and is invoked here for its *je ne sais quoi*.

2.

There is a line in a text by Mallarmé in which he describes the vibratory disappearance of the subject in the act of enunciation. There is also the repeated invocation of perpetual reflections, a cascade of mirrors, in his poetry. And there is Benjamin's reminder, formulated with reference to Brecht's theory and practice of gestures, that not every artform that relies on spatialisation, distancing, and fragmentation – as is the case with Mallarmé, too – is 'reflexive'.

3.

Heike-Karin Foell's canvases do not emerge from her books – cahiers of notes, scribbles, drawings, exercises – but at this point they have their necessary counterpart in them. One could describe them as probing relations with the ephemeral, as well as plumbing distances in and between media. We might look at these paintings as transposing the conditions of the book to the general spatial situation of the exhibition. But what, exactly, is the equivalent of the page here? Is it the single canvas, on which strokes, shades of color, the occasional interspersed letters figure? Or is it the wall, on which the paintings are mounted? Are we looking at the media-equivalents of several sheets, on which the artist has left her traces, marks, her work? Or, is the entire wall the equivalent of a printed surface, on which individual pictures appear? Is this a sketch book? Or a page in a magazine? Or, even a screen?

Whichever way – it surely is this: the becoming ephemeral of the exhibition wall. A case of questioning the monumentalizing ambitions of the painterly project, while confidently placing the medium within what seems a mobile of media – a balancing act, a constellational weighing, a construction, think Calder, but as a model for playing and weighing media against each other. A rare contemporary case of addressing painting's (and drawing's) place within our medial present, while also relating them to other media. A method of positioning them within a media constellational logic, one of layering, flipping a page, holding one interface and its constructional laws against another. (There are figures beyond the network to address (art in) the digital present.)

4.

(Also think of Raf Simons at Dior, dumping an architectural blob of blue delphiniums in the cour carrée of the Louvre last year, to accommodate what would turn out to be his last show for the Parisian house. The appearance of the organic, and fragile; yet a shelter, and an architecture. The textured surface of this 'tent', that corresponds with the floral embroideries on his oddly classical, yet futuristic dresses. Craft and the technological. Also, think back to the Foell's 2012 show in Basel, which featured a bouquet of blue delphiniums...)

-Philipp Ekardt

Mathew NYC

47 Can

al Street

New York, NY 10002

+1 (929) 229-9156

www.mathew-nyc.com

info@mathew-nyc.com