

Ken Okiishi

Eggleston und Andere, "reality bites"

16.09. - 18.10.2014

Mathew gallery is pleased to announce a new exhibition by Ken Okiishi.

Okiishi continues his formal and conceptual investigation of a cluster of preoccupations: urban space and experience de- and re-territorialized by internet-networks; forgotten zones; hybrid singularities; historical tracks that do not have to arrive at the pre-programmed outcomes; slicing open subjective frames of vision, where recognizability becomes an estranged conceptual operation; and languages also becoming estranged as they are crudely translated (and chaotically re-signified) into financially amenable--but otherwise totally incompatible--contexts.

At first glance, this appears to be a small exhibition of ostensibly documentary photography in a hybrid of the late-20th century "objective" of the Düsseldorf school of photography and the American color photography tradition of Eggleston and others; to a viewer unfamiliar with the area of (former) West Berlin that is pictured here, the photographs could appear to be "from the 80s or 90s"--but to anyone who has walked around the corner from the gallery, the time of these photographs appears rather difficult to place (it could be 20 years ago, or yesterday). But the sense of the photographic-object is also one of alienation--since the viewer may also find that s/he has no idea what s/he is looking at or why s/he is looking. What is perhaps documented here is the struggle, hidden behind an unflinching face, both of a place and of the photographic eye to cohere and to loosen from identitarian structures that oversignify blankness and some sort of "international" (i.e. Americanness) in this "forgotten" zone of formerly West Berlin. Many of the photographs, it turns out, are of objects and images in shop windows. (FYI: these photographs were taken in the summer of 2007; sat on various hard drives since then; and were printed, as a group, for the first time last month.)

Appearing into this exhibition, as if from a parallel but entirely alien zone, are two new works from Okiishi's recent series, *gesture/data*, where media histories and technologies of display, distribution, viewing and reception--from the affective condensation of "mark making" through television viewership through the greasy touchscreen swipe of network-hungry swarms--are thrown into formal and material collision. (In this series of works, flat-screen televisions are used as readymade support surfaces for weirdly gestural paintings, that somehow, in the process of working in the studio, also became studies in different modes of color-generation, perception, and simultaneous combination of pixel-light, pigment-light--or, of throwing generally undifferentiated modes of "how we see now" into obvious conflict (such as, the screen-image is not the same as dirt, etc.).

On the way from Airport Tegel to Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf, it often looks as if not even a speck of dust has moved in this city in 20 years. Yes--still after all of the gentrification-terror (and its gentrification-paranoia--and -ice cream).

I also noticed, at Manzini, that while there was still an elderly man eating only a raw cucumber with his hand while his retired junkie and/or professor friend ate her fries with stumbly fingers, that the room was also now populated with somewhat rich, middle-aged women, eating alone.

Many holes have been at least partially filled, and new objects and types can be seen in the gaps that used to--so pleasurably--offer a freak-bourgeois escape to flat neoliberal "experience." Investments have both gained and lost value; rents have generally skyrocketed--but the evidence suggests it is a completely open question as to whether or not anything has developed.

There is also a robot-bitcoin-discotheque-pet at the bottom of the stairs.

Ken Okiishi (born 1978) has recently had solo exhibitions at venues including Reena Spaulings, New York; the MIT List Visual Arts Center; the Hessel Museum of Art, Bard Center for Curatorial Studies; MD 72, Berlin; and Pilar Corrias, London. Okiishi was featured in the Whitney Biennial 2014 and *Based in Berlin* 2011; and has been in numerous group exhibitions at venues including Artists Space, New York; White Columns, New York; Museum Fridericianum, Kassel; Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria; ICA Philadelphia; Frieze Projects, Frieze Art Fair, London; Greene Naftali, New York; Bortolami, New York; GAMeC, Bergamo, Italy; Peep-hole, Milan; Herald Street, London; Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw; Camden Arts Center, London; Broadway 1602, New York; and American Fine Arts, New York. His upcoming exhibitions include *Cut to Swipe* at The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and a solo project at the Museum Ludwig, Köln.