

Wolfgang Voegele

Edgy Sleeper

18.01.-22.02.20

With the title “Edgy Sleeper“, Wolfgang Voegele, who lives in Cologne, is showing new works on canvas and fabric as well as two sculptures conceived for the exhibition. With the exception of the objects, the works were all created or completed in 2019.

With the “foot and ladder picture“, the artist offers a direct access to his work. In one of the two pictures, a schematic ladder can quickly be discerned, which divides the pictorial space into two parts. A tool that enables us to overcome heights in order to reach a place that we would otherwise not reach. The ladder is in a sense the interface between two levels. Like a brush, guided by one hand, mediates between paint and canvas. So we let ourselves in, climb up the rungs and overcome the edge of the picture. By mentioning the foot in the title “Untitled (foot and ladder picture)“, Voegele indicates the use of the ladder by a person and here subtly alludes to himself or the viewers of the picture.

A rare biographical reference to his childhood can be found in the title of the work “Haidebuck, Schibi, Schibo, Schibleschlag“. The title refers to the custom of “schibleschlag“ from the artist’s home in the south of Baden. It is about movement and dynamics, connected with the concrete childhood place at the Haidebuck and transformed into an touching image of a landscape of the soul.

Whereas Voegele used to approach his painting through drawing, he now works directly on the canvas. In the two works “Untitled (Wolfgang Zitterchrist)“ and “Untitled You hit me with a flower“, the traces of the drafts can be seen through the numerous pastose layers of paint applied. The genesis of the painting can thus be traced directly. For the artist this is both freedom and restriction at the same time, as he can act much more freely on the picture surface and thus detached from the sketch. That doubts can sometimes arise in this approach is perhaps made clear in the two titles, in that he makes direct reference to himself as Wolfgang Zitterchrist, or to the song by Lou Reed:

You hit me with a flower
You do it every hour
Oh, baby you’re so vicious

The choice of titles and, to a certain extent, his objects operate as indexical references or additions to the work. Influenced by his literary education, the artist opens up his visual world like a linguistic world: words, signs, symbols. In doing so, he develops an independent visual vocabulary of images that enable orientation in his world. In an intuitive way, he questions the possibilities of painting and thereby shifts between abstract and representational. Similar to a state of dawn, which describes the short moment between waking and sleeping; with one foot in the here and now, with the other in the abstract pictorial space.

In contrast to the intuitive approach in painting, the sculptures are conceptually shaped and thus offer the artist an extension to the two-dimensional surface of the canvas. The “Hard Edge Beds“ originated from the eponymous play on words of the exhibition title and refer to the American painting style of the Hard Edge, in which colored surfaces are juxtaposed and separated from one another. This is exactly what happens in the sculptures. The artist is interested in the combination of hard and soft materials and the actual paradox of a place of well-being, which the works resolutely resist. The „Edgy Sleeper“ is here conceived as a user of the bed, although it is not present in the works. He thus moves in this field of tension, the sharp-edged border between presence and absence. A fragile state that oscillates between cognition and codification.

TEXT:
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