

**Stefan Sandner*****Die gegenstandslose Welt / The Non-Objective World***

20 November 2013 – 11 January 2014

Stefan Sandner is known for his shaped canvases and above all for his pictures that transfer handwritten notes onto paintings. In his textual paintings, he articulates a basic distrust against a clear representational function of painting as well as against what is articulated linguistically. But the transfer of small notes to very large canvases also marks a dividing line when the notations are not writing but contain figurative and abstract elements. The translation from small to large, from drawing to painting, more or less a consciously controlled articulation for the re-presentation of a thought process that has taken place previously, is neither an illusionistic nor expressive one, in spite of the obvious traces of working, such as drips of paint or over-painted areas that open up a difference to the original note. The paintings in the exhibition, titled after a book by Malevich, are not merely monumentally enlarged trompe l'œils of a note, and they are not related to the expressive painting style of Cy Twombly. Rather, they are quite concrete.

In his works, Stefan Sandner shows us an exciting moment of the redefinition of painting. It is not just a representation, but a venue of an operation in which he brings particles of reality from existing sign systems into the painting in a form that also causes the binary opposition of abstraction-figuration to implode. Stefan Sandner's works make clear that the differentiation of a drawing by hand to a large painterly gesture is less relevant than the question whether the drawn line or the brushstroke is a direct expression or a conscious recreation.

In addition to text, the large formats also display pre-linguistic scribbles that fill and articulate fields and show paths that a felt-tip or ballpoint pen has taken on a sheet of paper (usually one folded several times over, sometimes numbered, A4 piece of paper carried around in a pocket), as well as figurative drawings of body fragments or gestures. A few of the sheets could be read as the expressions of somebody drawing unconsciously, others are clearly by several authors who have scribbled on a piece of paper from various angles to clarify something or demonstrate something to one another. They are reminiscent of the *cadavre exquis*, collectively produced drawings and texts of the surrealists. The *corps* – this thing, turned over again and again, between representation and abstract line – finds its way into Sandner's pictorial worlds, but the meaning is not decoded clearly. Clear is only that the choice of models is specific: they circle around questions of authorship.

On one painting, we see a longish autograph by Jonathan Meese: "Lieber / HERBERT / ich bin / ~~nicht~~ / Jonathan / Meese / 28. 11 2012 / Meese". (Dear Herbert, I am ~~not~~ Jonathan Meese 28.11 2012 Meese) Meese's characteristic handwriting has often been seen as a sign of his supposedly manic compulsion to produce. Another of the works in the exhibition thumbs its nose at us beholders and probably also at the artist Stefan Sandner. It is a drawing from James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, which itself is an enormous untranslatable riddle, because with its unorthodox language of newly assembled word fragments and its incoherent plot lines, it eludes all translation and all attempts to make it readable.

(Text: Anette Freudenberger)