

Gelatin ***Die Winter Show***

Boltenstern.Raum
Gelitin

22 January – 1 March 2014

The Gelatin exhibition in New York in the fall of 2012 had the title *The Fall Show*. (What was meant here was not so much the season, but a kinetic process: the sculptures were arranged in such a way that they fell from their pedestals when one activated a lifting mechanism similar to the one familiar from trash cans.) The current exhibition at the beginning of the year is called *Die Winter Show*, and accordingly, there are only white paintings in a white space with rounded corners, where the generic light of the white cube does not condense into a sharp-edged shadow line. But light and shadow contour the topography of the white relief paintings. They oscillate between many different shades of white, from bright white to ivory, similar to the stained white dress that Gudmundur Halgrimsson wore 2013 in the manner of Jack Smith at the exhibition *Loch* at the 21er Haus in Vienna. The paintings, rich in detail, are nonetheless as elegant and swanky as a white film set, off-white clothes, or the white architecture of the international style. This impression is only countered by white seat cushions on some pieces of Gelatin furniture: they emit gentle flatulence sounds when one sits on them.

Gelatin's use of the achromatic colour is a far cry from Robert Ryman's application of paint. Manzoni's Achromes would be more to the point here, even though it is not easy to place these extraordinary, powerful works in terms of art history. The pastose surfaces of these paintings are not so much painted but rather built up with paraffin and plasticine of various consistencies and shades. The abstract works are reminiscent not so much of winter landscapes, but of seascapes, coral, and algae, perhaps also of the emissions of sand-eating rock worms, even though they are far more abstract than earlier plasticine works. Occasionally one might identify openings as mouths, eyes, holes, or lava blisters. But the pulsating effect remains. The works seem organic and not finally fixed or ossified. According to Bataille, who rejects the notion of an essential or substantial form, the formless, the *informe* is performative. It exists operationally, not as a simple negation of form, but as a continuous accident or coincidence.

Gelatin work collectively, but not necessarily together, and at irregular times on their haptic pictorial objects. They form the material in all sorts of ways into holes, bulges, impressions, and drops. It is kneaded, pressed, smoothed, poured, thrown and so on, by hand and with tools, and forms and handling vary, as far as possible, with each detail. By taking recourse to a creative *ur-impulse*, familiar to everyone from childhood or perhaps from baking and cooking, the anti-authoritarian interior organisation of the works turns into an almost slapstick-like differentiation of original composition possibilities. A universe of individual micro-psychograms of individual forms and events is distributed over the entire area. Decisions are revoked, plasticine is taken down and then brought into play again. It is a process that could potentially be sysphusized ad nauseam.

A more impressionist, abstract work as well as one similar in terms of structure and composition, but this time in black, which the artists exhibit under the label Gelitin in the Boltenstern.Raum, constitute a variation to the series in white. In black, the latter work has a completely different effect that cannot be simply described as a reversal. Like a black hole that swallows matter, surface and intensity are condensed. Here, too, the whoopee cushions rupture the experience of a perfect panel painting. Gelatin/Gelitin counter the dilemma of the corrupted form, namely that the anti-form also always becomes formalism, with a vital, uninhibited sense of humour.