

Renaud Regnery

Tatem und Tobu

5.11. – 17.12.2016

The visual concepts of Renaud Regnery's current exhibition seem familiar without our recognizing them: large format, monochromatic surfaces in pink with minimal, gestural touches, behind them strict grid paintings in various formats that reveal optical traces of the geometric and reminiscences of constructive modernist painting. What at first seems like an especially refined ensemble of the antagonists of abstract, conceptual painting in the very next moment develops into a cluster of references that goes beyond any semblance of an updating of painterly codes and conventions or a corresponding critique of them.

As the exhibition title already suggests, numerous moments of displacement inhere within the formally different seeming series of works. The supposedly homogenous picture surfaces when seen up close reveal themselves to be wallpapered strips, whose color-to-shape relationship is defined by precisely controlled relations of pictorial format, selection of industrial mass product, and adhesive stripes.

The supposedly geometric abstractions (FTPGS) are based on visual materializations of original American wallpaper printed in the 1930s during the Great Depression in trompe l'œil fashion with tile patterns to simulate scrub-resistant tile walls, contributing to the aestheticization of everyday life in as economic a way as possible. The work group (PKPTGS) feeds in contrast from pink died plotter paper in a machine format as used today for print advertising, everyday office life, or in sketches. To that extent, the subtle, expressive-suggestive markings result in these largely technically-assembled works not from subjective painterly gestures, but from literally handmade and coincidental seeming imprints, streaks, and scratches, in brief, from work activities, that basically could be enacted by anyone—but actually this is only true in a limited sense.

The works do not submit to modern patterns or the self-referential order, but they appear autonomous of their context, to then again be captured by their origin and their history. While the wallpaper patterns become image are still bound by their material makeup to their former use and as yellowing color nuances reveal the time that has passed, the monochromatic pink pictures are quite programmatically placed in the here and now. For there is hardly another color that evokes such a powerful automatic association of successfully circulated visual worlds of commodities, optical key stimuli, and cliché-like stereotypes.

The affective signal impact of the pink tableaux is not enduring, and its fleetingness is indeed intentional. Under the influence of light, the works will change their aesthetic appearance over the course of time to a certain extent. And as linkages on the visual surface to product design, decoration, advertising, and the omnipresent aestheticization of realms of our lives take shape, they conversely also reveal ever new modifications with a dynamic all their own.

What remains are various intensities of image. The referential diversity is thus not the only determining pictorial determinate in Regnery's works; this is insured merely by the playful seriality of the two work cycles.

The works are a performance of their own materiality and emergence, and are pictures and transitions at the same time. As such, they dock on to spaces beyond the visual surface, to social relations, to our everyday experiences and our affective habits of vision and desire.

Birgit Effinger 2016 (transl. by Brian Currid)