

Leslie

Axel Koschier

Opening: 28.4.17

Exhibition: 29.4.17-27.5.17

Memories of the future

Like many of his contemporaries the artist Axel Koschier, *1980 Vienna, searches for new terrain not so much in the what, but rather in the how. Over the past few years the artist has created numerous frottage works by applying paint to a wall, to then remove it using water or Tyvek (a nonwoven fabric made from polyethylene) or balloon silk soaked in solvent. Koschier has created further acetone frottage works by transferring toner pigments from laser printed paper templates. The results of these processes are then stretched over thin wooden frames. The artist has limited control over this process and aligns him with other artists of his generation. Today, working with process has become so widespread due to undefined results that attach themselves to the broad semantic field of abstract painting. In his exhibition at Leslie, Berlin Koschier has altered his approach to his (acetone) frottage works: rather than using material to remove paint from the wall, he has applied heavily diluted paint to a white recess on a wall painted in light grey by using a folded piece of cloth, so that the texture of the cloth – which itself is not presented in the exhibition – is visible in the resulting wall paintings.

In a sense, Koschier replaces the missing frames with three windows and a door, which serve to frame the wall paintings and to parallel the openings within the gallery. This point of reference prevents the work from becoming a purely formal exercise. It also connects it with numerous contemporary works, in particular, within the field of sculpture, and also within installation, which continue to explore the contextual as a modus rather than the contextual as a style. It also links it to object-orientated approaches and the traditions of institutional critique and of Kontext Kunst, rather than reducing it to scientific research. The appeal of Koschier's practice lies also in its ability to communicate a continuing connection to abstract painting, a communication which is in itself inherent within the painting process. Uncoupled from their original media, artistic currents can withstand even extreme paradigm shifts.

The motif of the window within art points to premodern pictorial politics, whereas Koschier's variant appears to represent the historicism of his practice – the picture as a portrayal rather than the archetype, and to emphasise the paintings by framing the model characters, which is by contrast a very modern approach. Also on a purely formal level, Koschier's works point to a - predominately American - late modernity wherein the direction of reference is double: they offer the works of Helen Frankenthaler as a reference but also a present that constantly alters the past and how it is perceived.

Christoph Bruckner

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