

MELANIE SMITH

grey (negative) rectangle on white background

Opening: Friday, February 22nd 6 pm – 8 pm

Exhibition period: February 23rd – March 29th 2008

Peter Kilchmann Gallery is pleased to announce the fourth solo exhibition of English artist Melanie Smith. We will show an expansive video installation as well as new paintings, drawings, photos and a video projection.

When entering the main room of the gallery, a wall reaching into the room catches our attention. On the white painted wall we can see the negative print of the painting process. This is indicated by some colour stains that seem to build a frame. Melanie Smith refers to these as “negative paintings” and in this context picks out the following two central themes: She refers to the process of painting on one hand. The "negative image" sort of functions as a witness of the creative act of an absent image. On the other hand, the white image space hints towards the deconstruction of illusionism, which is usually assigned to painting. The artist denies to create an illusionary image space and hence confronts the beholder with a white canvas.

The sound that is audible in the exhibition room eventually leads the visitor towards the video installation “grey (negative) rectangle on white background, 2008” behind the wall construction. This room is dominated by movable walls which remind one of a studio situation. A video installation and a monitor screen on the floor show images of the artist while painting. Thus, the observer becomes a witness of the creation process of a painting, which is however not part of the exhibition. This ostensible documentary is broken up by excerpts, leaps in time and the permanent usage of the zoom. The context of time and space that is here generated physically and filmically, refers to the “negative painting” on the exterior wall and once again alludes to the illusionary painting machinery. A series of sixteen photos as well as series of six paintings are shown in this exhibition. Both take up motifs from the video installation and visualize the inversion of the negative effect.

In the smaller exhibition room of the gallery, a video projection originally recorded with S8 can be seen. A diffusely painted, bright canvas takes up the entire space on the monitor screen and zooms out with increasing velocity. The mystery of the picture is quickly being unravelled: The screen has been fastened to a bicycle carrier. We can watch a cyclist who rides his bike on a lonely country road towards the horizon. He falls down and then continues cycling. This is where the film ends and begins anew. The display screen is divided into four parts, each of which show the scene slightly time-delayed in a loop. The central theme of this sequence is the metaphor of the myth of timelessness and autonomy in painting.

In 2006 and 2007, Melanie Smith had completed two solo exhibitions amongst others, at The Laboratory of Art and Ideas at Belmar (Lakewood) and at MUCA Campus (Mexico City). In this context, she published her first monographic catalogue “Spiral City & Other Vicarious Pleasures. Melanie Smith”. March 2008, Melanie Smith will open an exhibition about her Parres-Cycle at the Miami Art Museum in cooperation with Rafael Ortega. On the occasion of this exhibition, a publication will be presented. At the beginning of 2009 her solo exhibition will be displayed, partly modified, at the MIT List Visual Arts Center in Cambridge/Boston.

The artist will be present at the opening. For photos and further information, please do not hesitate to contact Florian Seedorf at +41 44 440 39 31 or via e-mail: f.seedorf@peterkilchmann.com