

SCHWARZ CONTEMPORARY

Press Release - September 2014

JOHANNA JAEGER

We are pleased to announce the exhibition *fictional space* by JOHANNA JAEGER, born in 1985 in Heidelberg. This is the first solo show by the artist, who lives in Hamburg and Berlin, at SCHWARZ CONTEMPORARY.

A small black rectangle on a white wall. At first sight, we recognise a bright shape surrounded by darkness. Examining it closely, we notice the bony lines separating the brighter form - the wing of a bat? The title of the 2014 work sheds light on its motif: *n. t. (umbrella)*. The light shaping umbrella of a photo lamp, usually a technical aid for the photographer, was transformed into this appearance of a magical wing through numerous experiments with the exposure time.

Fictional space - in the sense of imagined space - plays an important role in Johanna Jaeger's work: she creates a subjective photographic reality, a playground of the imaginary for personal impressions and surprising moments, that questions the truth of what is depicted. The artist playfully puts the viewer's perceptual habits to the test, particularly in regard to objects and spaces.

The work is influenced by the observation of light and reflections of an everyday surrounding, the reflected interior and exterior. In this regard the artist's recent two-year stay in New York is present in her repertoire of motifs: the work *Blaue Stunde* (2014) refers to the deep blue sky in New York at dusk, which she imitates by manipulating the colour filters in the analogue darkroom printing process. Two eye-like, shiny points in the upper third of the monochromatic photograph unsettle the viewer: nails reflecting the last daylight, but at the same time pretending to actually attach the photograph to the wall. A similarly poetic use of colour and light can be found in the large 2014 work *studio reflection (green, blue, warm tones - trees, sky, interior)*, where Jaeger captures the rich colour spectrum of interior and exterior spaces on an aluminum plate, offering a highly atmospheric rendering of nature and architecture. The resulting picture-in-picture and time-in-time structures allow an insight into the artist's strangely exposed, constructed world.

The emphasis on the actual process of analogue photography is quite intentional. Individual materials and technical devices become the works' subjects and lead to a certain personification of photography and its processes. In the series *release* (2013), a camera cable release is the protagonist. The artist plays with the ambiguity of the term - 'release' also standing for liberation. Accordingly, the short cable - due to the small format at first sight hardly recognisable - seems to be liberated and float freely through the pictorial space of the six-part work.

Similarly, for the digital camera in *viewfinder* (2014), universal law seems to be suspended. A distorted visual perception is represented with a view from behind the camera. While the photo in the photo makes sense logically, the slope of the floor seems unnatural, artificial, basically 'wrong'.

The sculpture *Quader (geteilt)* from 2014 is physically separated in the gallery space. The simple form of a cuboid is cut through in the most complicated way possible: in a spatial diagonal. Both elements, black and white, are displayed like building blocks of a set and can be rejoined in thought.

Johanna Jaeger's perspective perplexes us: bizarre and mysterious situations of everyday life are reflected in the photographs and installations, challenging us to question our perception.

They raise the question whether a non-constructed camera gaze even exists. An almost provocative response to this question is the 2014 work *n. t. (lens)*. Rather than looking through the lens into the picture, the viewer now looks directly into the lens where a miniature reflection of a room can be seen.

Text: Clara Tang

Translation: Wilhelm Werthern, www.zweisprachkunst.de

The opening will be on Thursday, 11 September 2014, from 6 to 8 pm.

The exhibition can be seen from 12 September to 18 October 2014.

For further information, please contact the gallery at mail@schwarz-contemporary.com