

SCHWARZ CONTEMPORARY

Press Release - March 2018

JOHANNA JAEGER - checkerboard sky

16 March to 28 April 2018

We are pleased to announce the third solo show by Johanna Jaeger at SCHWARZ CONTEMPORARY.

Time - passing, stopping, gone by - and the movement within it are the intellectual points of departure of all the works in *checkerboard sky*. The exhibition provides insights into the artist's ongoing reflection on photography, which is linked to exploring other media such as video, installation, and sculpture.

The work *sidewalk fossil*, displayed close to the gallery entrance, is based on a photograph taken in New York, showing a leaf that was accidentally immortalized in the pavement, next to which the fresh leaf seems like a representative of a second, more current era. In order to underline the entanglement of past and present, in each case one of the leaves was exposed longer with the aid of stencils, and thus emphasized. The artist experiments, she manipulates and transforms her material - be that a photograph or an object, as for example in the installation *anti-gravity pebble (top to bottom)*. The pebble, result of compaction and shaped by continuous repetitive movement, was cut apart in two equal pieces by the artist and then mounted in the space in such a way that the two halves mark the start and end point of a possible fall. When setting up her exhibitions, Johanna Jaeger frequently considers the entire space: her exhibitions are mise-en-scènes that go far beyond a simple presentation of individual works. Her works, as well as her spatial interventions challenge the perception of the surroundings. For example, at the back of the installation, the photograph *monument for a second (splash)* is displayed, which captures the moment of a stone falling into water. How are these two works related? Are they separated or linked by the wall? Was the movement of the stone captured and stopped here for a second time?

The counter-pole to these two works is the video *unstill (20 minutes)*, which measures the duration of a passing movement: black ink sinks into water and forms graphic, constantly changing shapes that slowly dissolve in the water, until the

mixture almost stands still. We believe we are looking at a photograph or a drawing – only on close examination can we make out faint changes. The artist has the material of her constructed arrangement perform according to the principle of planned coincidence.

The series *developing horizon* shows the various steps in the development of a Polaroid. The changing colours are the result of the progressing photographic emulsion that, step by step, makes the photographed object, the horizon, visible. Not the horizon itself, but rather the time of development, the process of the analogue emergence of the image, becomes the object of the individual pictures that are printed and mounted on aluminium. The conceptual core is effortlessly linked to the visual vocabulary that is typical for Johanna Jaeger: always precise, but never dry or cool. In her works in this show, title and work have the same relationship as signifier and signified: they are a closely interwoven pair.

In *melting time*, the title forges a link between the abstract idea and its realization as well. The photographs of this series seem like ink drawings, initially the first and last picture seem to have nothing in common, and yet they are linked. Disappearance and appearance intertwine, the material forges its path within the framework constructed by the artist, the work reveals its experimental set-up without telling too much.

In *studio sky (checkerboard clouds)*, again, contrary elements interlock. The cloudy sky, always moving and characterized by endlessly changing formations, is linked to the geometric principle of a checkerboard. Superimposed once as a positive and once as a negative, and kept in black and white, the motif becomes an abstract image. But in the top left-hand corner, reality enters. Playing with opposites – a recurrent element of Johanna Jaeger's artistic practice – also appears in *permanent liquid_1* and *permanent liquid_2*. Two glass containers filled with water, with ink slowly spreading out in it, were placed on two analogue photographs of slabs of stone. In these works, the currently moving pattern of the flowing ink is superimposed on the pattern of the stones – the result of a material movement that petrified a long time ago. In the moment of photographing it, this movement is captured as well: as an image.

Text: Ferial Nadja Karrasch / Translation: Wilhelm Werthern

The opening is on Thursday, 15 March 2018, from 6 to 8 pm. For further information and images, please contact the gallery at mail@schwarz-contemporary.com