

GALERIA JOAN PRATS

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MARC BRANDENBURG

The work by Marc Brandenburg strays from another common art-market alternative: that of market art versus discursive or project art. He comes from a form of production that no longer exists and that it's influenced by the punk avant-garde of former West Berlin, an avant-garde that deals with absurdity and grotesqueness, with the questioning of masculinity with its imperatives of unambiguity, as well as the prevailing hedonism of the eighties. This Berlin took place at night; its humour was also darker and more sarcastic than the mood of the post-Cold-War Berlin.

After this milieu had disappeared, Brandenburg took part in political art activities that mushroomed everywhere in reunited Germany in the early nineties, but without forging an identity as a political artist for himself. He exhibited his works at galleries that did not belong to the discursive and project-oriented political art scene, because he was more interested in maintain himself inside a tradition of independent art in which political and formal elements did not always have to prove their *raison d'être* to each other. Nevertheless, a tension is developed Brandenburg's work, in black-and-white drawings that made him popular.

Many of these drawings have dealt with scenes that indicate a loss of control, extremely physical scenes: sexuality, football fans, ravers, masses of people, but also movement. The structure and composition of the pictures do not exalt disorder as an allegory of ecstasy or the grandeur of chaos. Even in the works themselves, the excess is always positioned against extreme definition and contours.

Marc Brandenburg (1965) lives and works. His work has been exhibited in art centers as: Contemporary Fine Arts of Berlin, Kunstmuseum of Bonn, Autocenter of Berlin, Museum der Moderne of Salzburg (Austria), Cobra Museum of Amsterdam, Bielefelder Kunstverein of Bielefeld (Germany), Union Gallery of London, Hamburger Kunsthalle of Hamburg, Künstlerhaus Bethanien GmbH of Berlin, Wetering Galerie of Amsterdam, Museum Ludwig of Cologne, Goethe Institut of Tokyo, Museum für Moderne Kunst of Frankfurt, Frankfurter Kunstverein of Frankfurt, Kunstverein of Oldenburg (Germany), Palais Chaillot in Paris, Kunstraum of Innsbruck (Austria), Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (UK), The Harlem Studio Museum of New York.

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TJORG DOUGLAS BEER

Tjorg Douglas Beer (born 1973, lives in Berlin) steadfastly refuses to attribute any conceptual statement or stringency of form to his artistic techniques, but certain themes do occur again and again in his work. The images he creates often explore global issues such as war, politics and social structures. He produces different scenarios using elements arising from everyday absurdities, such as our media-saturated world, and explores these themes without giving them a moral tone.

Beer turns one of the gallery's rooms into a chamber or cabinet. He installs a structure made from paper, wire and small neon lights that connects different types of work in a spacefilling chaotic pseudo-scheme. References to scientific, religious, political, social and economical structures appear and disappear as notions and associations. The works in the space and structure become a projection of thoughts and perception on the outside walls of our mind.

In his series of collages *Princess Utopia* (2010) Beer uses colour photocopies of etchings and photogravures as the basis for the portraits. They depict the sickly pale faces of mannequins that have been pasted over and painted. Mutated subjects of an inexplicable experiment. The applications cut out of carton, meanwhile, provide us with fragmentary headlines or slogans.

The works shown are collages, paintings, small objects.

Tjorg Douglas Beer (1973) lives and works in Berlin. He studied at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste (HFBK) in Hamburg. His work has been shown art centers as: Kunstraum Innsbruck (Austria), Kunstverein Hamburg (Germany), Museum für Moderne Kunst Bremen, Museum für Bildende Künste Leipzig, Temporäre Kunsthalle Berlin, Nikolaj Contemporary Art Center Copenhagen, Arizona State University Art Museum (USA), Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art Sapporo (Japan), X-Initiative New York, Mitchell-Innes & Nash New York, Timothy Taylor Gallery London, Arndt & Partner Zurich, Patricia Low Gstaad, Produzentengalerie Hamburg.

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CARSTEN FOCK

The works by Carsten Fock evoke art forms associated with transcendence, religion, ecstasy, and inner experience: romantic landscape painting, Expressionism, Christian iconography, and Outsider art.

Fock questions the notion of the artist as visionary, avant-gardist, and outsider with analytical, serial experimental paradigms. His drawings and paintings are both manic and controlled and with each gesture reflect the creative process. Thus, in his landscape motifs Fock uses fleeting markings such as horizontal, vertical, or diagonal lines to create the illusion of perspective, only to have these seeming hints at horizons, forests, or hilltops collapse into energetic, reduced abstract compositions.

The painting consists of its dissolution – it is not indebted to pure gestures or to figuration. Fock's works repeatedly display similar constellations, which look like logos: stars, triangles, crosses. The constant repetition and combinations of motifs and gestures give rise to distinctive ciphers which dialectically deal with failed utopias and longings, as well as with the longing for actual progress and renewal in art.

Carsten Fock (1968) lives and works in Berlin. He studied at the Staatliche Hochschule für bildende Künste, Städelschule in Frankfurt/Main and at Hochschule der bildenden Künste, in Kassel. His work has been exhibited in art centers as: Temporäre Kunsthalle de Berlin, ZKM in Karlsruhe (Germany), Bonner Kunstverein in Bonn, Kunstverein Lüneburg (Germany), Bregenzer Kunstverein in Bregenz (Austria), Bielefelder Kunstverein in Bielefeld (Germany), Kunstverein Arnsberg (Germany), Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art in Thessalonica (Greece), Museum van Bommel van Dam in Venlo (The Netherlands), Kunstverein Langenhagen (Germany), Transit Art Space in Stavanger (Norway), Kjubh Kunstverein in Cologne, Frankfurter Kunstverein in Frankfurt/Main and Steinle Contemporary in Munich.

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HANS-JÖRG MAYER

The work by Hans-Jörg Mayer is linked to a contemporary form of Pop Art that proclaims a contingency between things and their signifiers and reflects the supermarket experience of the surrounding world. Thus, Mayer's artistic assault on the world is based not on overbearing comprehension, but on appropriation, a method that seems much more cautious and meek and at the same time more accurate.

We must emphasize Mayer's current appropriation of realism's principles, plus his simultaneous occupation with pure painting – for Mayer, always a matter of course in his work. His paintings based their potency from something other than the aesthetic discourse. Although they responds to questions as: how does painting justify itself today?, how can you fruitfully associate figuration with concretion?, How much real world is in a painting?

The effect of Mayer's works does not set in reflection, it begins where a viewer lets himself in for an encounter with the picture. Mayer's art is an exchange between painter and viewer. This exchange is much more genuine and simultaneously rarer than it may at first sound. His perceptive everyday scenes and phantasms are its starting point.

Mayer's paintings are eloquent partners. They sparkle with intelligence and beauty. Embedding the works in a committed aesthetic development, comparing them to those of other artists, the (sub)cultural background, Hans-Jörg Mayer does not live first and foremost for his "work", but for the figures and the goings-on that have found their place in his paintings. The fact that these figures mostly do not depict any real persons, but are modeled on other depictions, increases their effect just as much as the allegory increases the degree of their reality.

Hans-Jörg Mayer (1955) lives and works in Berlin. His work has been exhibited in art centers as: Museum Fridericianum of Kassel, Bonner Kunstverein of Bonn, Kunsthalle Wien of Vienna, Museum Ludwig of Cologne, Kunsthalle Nürnberg of Nuremberg, Neue Galerie and Künstlerhaus of Graz (Austria), Center for Contemporary Arts of Berlin, INIT-Kunsthalle of Berlin, Martin-Gropius-Bau of Berlin, Magasin - Centre D'Art Contemporain of Grenoble (France), Ballhaus Ost of Berlin, La Fabrika of Prague, Soros Center for Contemporary Art of Ljubljana (Slovenia), Kunstraum Daxer of Munich, Institute of Contemporary Art of University of Pennsylvania of Philadelphia, Museum Moderner Kunst Kärnten of Klagenfurt (Austria), and Museum of Contemporary Art of North Miami, Florida.