

Raphael Danke "In Absentia"

The exhibition "In Absentia" (Lat. "in the absence of", mainly used as a legal or medical term) by Raphael Danke consists of elements suited, in a prototypical way, for the laying out of a living interior: blocks made from plaster board, a door/a table, a sofa bed with a carpet-like covering, window frames, a pair of shoes (and a drain). These are objects that could take on an affective or symbolic value due to their provenance in an intimate domestic sphere, or demarcate this, becoming available "als Referenzfläche des Bewohners selbst" ["as surfaces of reference for the inhabitant himself"] (Alexander Braun, "Robert Gober – Werke von 1976 bis heute", Verlag für moderne Kunst, Nuremberg, 2003, p.136).

Some of the objects in the exhibition are bestowed with a kind of becoming-body, thereby distancing them from their original use-value. The door with the title "La Suture", an MDF standard model, is shifted around a horizontal seam, bars fold out like animated table legs, the inner cardboard construction can be seen in the cuts. The pre-fitted hinges and keyhole have been preserved. The high heels of black patent leather shoes are deformed diagonally as if following an inner dream-logic. In the work "Broken Windows", the two window arches, reduced to their metal frames, create butterfly-like mirroring half-moons.

In his collages made from the pages of fashion magazines, Raphael Danke makes use of a similarly deconstructive approach. He removes the figures along their contours and joins the background area – sometimes with the remains of hair, and partly overlapping – together. The sofa bed entitled "Dunkle Bereiche vergrößern" ["Enlarge Dark Areas"] also revolves around the theme of presence/absence. The cover's bright streaks of colour were derived from an aura-photograph of the artist. As in an attempt at auratic heightening, Raphael Danke removed himself with the help of the Photoshop filter "enlarge dark areas", and had the result woven by hand.

The conceptual skeleton of the exhibition is formed by the work "Grundriss 1:20" ["Ground Plan 1:20"], an architectural plan showing a spatial section with dynamic walls of different strength and gradient. The explanatory caption names the Futuristic painting "Dynamism of a Human Body", 1913 by Umberto Boccioni as a template, and thus interweaves the substance of the fictive space with the physical and psychic energy of the human body.

Raphael Danke's work feeds on a network of motif-based and formal art-historical references: the brick sculpture "Equivalent I-VIII" by Carl André, puppet-bodies by Hans Bellmer, occult séances, a table by Max Ernst and a sofa by Dorothea Tanning, criminological ghost stories which one investigates because of their suspicious elements. In terms of insight, these are deceptive connections that are only made in the process of production or in the subsequent reading, hanging on the work as a kind of residue.