

Sinta Werner - «Das Scheitern der Oberfläche»

Exhibition: 2 March until 20 April 2013

Text: Matthias Planitzer

Bruce Bridgeman was for 67 years imprisoned in a flat world. He had no spatial vision. If other people pointed out a blackbird on a branch he was not able to see it. The bird was part of an open unclear expanse of trees, fields and clouds, everything indeterminable. The American had been used to this limitation when he visited his local cinema last year where they showed an 3D movie. He was first sceptical but then he experienced an amazing surprise: as soon as the show started the pictures moved towards him in a way he had never known before. Bridgeman was thrilled. The effect was even permanent: after he had left the theatre he saw the world with different eyes. Houses, traffic lights, cars, passengers, even the dirt in the gutter were to him as lively as never before. From there onwards he moved through a spatial world; the doctors were left behind puzzled.

In the case of Bridgeman it is noteworthy, that the surface of a movie screen of all things was the one who gave him the gift of spatial perception. We are used to the fact, that spaces are depicted in a certain perspective either through the lense of a camera or the eye of an artist and that the viewer can imagine it. This visual coding and decoding processes are born from experience, something Bridgeman didn't have. There had to be more space in the supposed plane picture than originally presumed. But wasn't it an elaborate illusion, which attained wondrous space from a simple picture?

The surface has failed. That's how Sinta Werner would judge who combines works for her new solo exhibition at Christinger De Mayo in which she traces the space in images and thereby discloses their fragile relationship.

She bares unerringly the insecurities and the breaches between space and image, she interlaces them and eventually conflicts them and leads them ad absurdum. Her photographs, collages and installations are not traditional trompe-l'oeils, whose wondrous illusions might implode at any time. Werner tricks the observer only to inform him about the deceit a moment later and eventually to unsettle him about the offered truth of space and image: on the one hand Sinta Werner constructs new spaces in her photographs and deconstructs on the other hand in

elaborate interventions the already existing spaces into contorted areas to finally melt the terms of space and layers into a common blur.

Sinta Werner detaches in her series «Das Scheitern der Oberfläche» («The Failure of Surface») individual structural elements from their architectural bodies and converts them into a fractional spatial dimension. Crooked balustrades protrude from formerly plane car park façade, pilasters stick out from the paper and latticed slots corrugate an entire house front: Sinta Werner transports and multiplies these structural pieces into the actual space in front of the image sphere thereby defying the imagined relationships of space of the plane picture, rebel against them and finally even extend them. The artist places these interventions deliberately and adeptly in the picture space, just subtle enough to not fully break with the content of the picture yet distinct enough to enlarge and extend the architecture and its surrounding space. Sinta Werner finally takes this practice to the extreme in her series «Möglichkeiten des Offensichtlichen» («Possibilities of the Obvious») by distorting, fragmenting and newly aligning the image space so much so that it is hard to tell which structures that are dismantling themselves from the paper are just there and which ones are added by her hand. The space competes here with the image for the claim to truth.

Sinta Werner reaches this confusion also from the other end: exemplary for her intervention with found spaces, often articulated in site specific installations, is in «Das Scheitern der Oberfläche» her space consuming work «Ambitious Grades of Self-Transcendence». In the middle of the front room of the gallery Christinger De Mayo has she installed a column that winds its way to the ceiling and which sides are corrugated into spiral designs of edges and creases. The shadows that thereby appear seem exceptionally rich in contrast. Looked at closely it becomes apparent that this is partly based on the print of the surface. Werner had studied the shadows of the model and adjusted the print process accordingly. This enhancement – Werner herself speaks of a duplication – of spatial factors such as the view, light or shadow by manipulation of the surface are often found in Werner's works. Through the depiction of the spatial objects on themselves she targets the blur of space and layers just as with her rather photographic pieces: in this elaborate resonance between two seemingly incompatible dimensions the illusion of novel room models appear. They rapidly breach themselves on subtly proposed contradictions, though. Space or layer: it is not to be decided conclusively in Sinta Werner's works. In both the other is inherent. Not only the customary understanding of surface has failed but the space has as well.