

TANJA POL GALERIE

Alex Müller
PETER THE GREEN
05/05/11 - 25/06/11

For her second solo exhibition at the Tanja Pol Galerie Alex Müller combines new large-format paintings with sculptures and installative elements created on location.

The exhibition is characterized by a strong sense of colour, with pictures in ink on red or blue velvet, on textiles and on canvas. The colours continue in an installation grouped around the gallery's central pillar, with red-yellow apples, and culminate in the third room, which is lit by green neon and in general uses green. In this way the visitors are led into the back room, and when they return from there they will see the front rooms in red, as the green room leaves a red imprint on the eye.

The paintings show more or less clear and sometimes just sketchy figures – the portrait is a central theme in Alex Müller's painting. Who are those "portrayed"? Although many of Müller's pictures have an affinity to the portrait which is hard to pin down, no people from real life are meant here. "Cissie and Bellamy" is the title of the picture on red velvet with two figures that are linked to each other by ornamental ribbons painted in oil pastel. Thus we assume that the figures are named, but who are Cissie and Bellamy? Who is Cassiopeia?

A work placed on the floor is titled "For Smut", and is evidently a child's skipping rope that has been left there after play. But this little rope is a trompe l'oeil, as it is in fact a bronze sculpture and the rope cannot be used (any more). This is contradiction within itself, as is the second sculpture, "Everything There", a kind of stepladder made of bamboo, which also cannot be used, as the open areas between the rungs are glazed.

Smut is a small, rather precocious but also very likeable boy in Peter Greenaway's 1988 film "Drowning by Numbers". Greenaway's work is full of opulent stages, baroque images, mysterious plots, and allusions to private mythologies. At this point Müller and Greenaway cross paths, which leads to the title of the exhibition – "Peter the Green" as a pun on the filmmaker's name which expresses in words the poetics of playful mystification that accompanies Müller's work.

Smut is also obsessed with games (a blue rectangular picture in the exhibition is entitled "The Game of the Tides"), and throughout the film he holds forth on the subject of mysterious games, while Pieter Breughel's painting "Children's Games" is repeatedly shown in the film.

These cross-references between works are also like an endless game: "Day In Day Out" is the name of the green room. Here there is a small children's bench, with peas spilled over it. For Müller, peas stand for eternity, as they are uncountable. Day in, day out, on and on, into eternity. The mood of this exhibition is borne by a narrative of private mythologies that cannot be told, but can be

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perceived as long as you are willing to open up to it without being provided the key to these works' "meanings", the names of their protagonists, their titles, or the intentions of the artist.

Alex Müller, born in 1971, will have a comprehensive solo exhibition this year in December at the Leopold-Hoesch Museum in her native city Dueren. In June she participated in the show "Secret Societies", curated by Alexis Vaillant and Chistina Ricupero. 2009 she showed her work within the exhibition "7x14", curated by Karola Krauss, at Staatlichen Kunsthalle Baden-Baden. All exhibitions were accompanied by catalogues. Since 2011 she is awardee of the foundation Kunstfonds, Bonn. Alex Mueller lives and works in Berlin.