

Nairy Baghramian  
Ayzit Bostan  
Gillian Carnegie  
Margarete Jakschik  
Edward Krasinski  
Antje Majewski  
Eva Rothschild  
Anja Schwörer  
Monika Sosnowska  
Katja Strunz  
Gary Webb

Concept by Anke Kempkes and Antje Majewski

"The aim of modern painting and sculpture is a creative experiment, an invention of form, which stimulates a growing range of opportunities provided by everyday life."

(Katarzyna Kobro/ Wladyslaw Strzeminski)

Splendor Geometrik presents a selection of activities in the current art scenery which are in new ways dedicated to abstraction. The work on show here are connected by a special 'architecture', a room-design developed by Berlin based artist Antje Majewski, consisting of special artistic modules turning the exhibition into an imaginary space experimenting with a special treatment of a group show.

These room-elements are not establishing unifying links. They are foremost highlighting the far reaching characters of the single works, which have their origins in Poland, England and Germany. Accordingly the different sculptural and painterly sensibilities of the pieces on show are outlined in particularly intense ways.

A recurring motive in the formal structure of the works in Splendor Geometrik is the consciously introduced error occurring when spatial forms are turning into illusions, when a visual logic of three-dimensionality is shaped out of the two-dimensional or is unexpectedly falling back into it.

The painting After Katarzyna Kobro, Suspended Construction (2),(1921-22) by Antje Majewski 'depicts' a sculpture by Polish constructivist Katarzyna Kobro. The fate of this piece of work of the time of classical avant-garde and its original formal appearance is not known anymore due to the fact that it was destroyed early or simply got lost over time as what happened with many works of Kobro. There is just a rough drawing left of the piece and a photographic reproduction, the exact dimensions are unknown. Nevertheless for a today taste and sensibility in sculpture this free hanging piece we called casually 'diadem' looks surprisingly contemporary and it became a central point for this project:

# G A L E R I E   G I S E L A   C A P I T A I N

In Kobro's *Suspended Construction (2)* a miraculous and unsolvable twist is at work where modernist reduction and rhythm is linked to symbolic signs like the cross and the circle providing the object with infinite possibilities of attached meaning. The sculpture stands in for a process which, - in spite of the strict anti-illusionist theory of "Unism" which the artists couple Kbro/Strzeminski had developed -, was always involved in contradictions over the fulfilments of their own modernist rigidity.

The fact that Antje Majewski is giving Kbro's object of the early 20s in her painting an aura which the avant-garde artist drastically tried to overcome in her works, turns the image into an icon of historical tension re-enacting the border crossings between figuration and abstraction, functionalism and illusionism. As central representative of the 60s and 70s Neo-avant-garde in Poland the works by concept artist Edward Krasinski presented in *Splendor Geometrik* quite naturally developed out of the artistic attitudes of Polish Modernism.

Krasinski, who was from the beginning on closely associated with the story of the Galeria Foksal in Warsaw, started in the 60s to experiment on his characteristic Interventions. These white plywood boxes were positioned in more or less specific everyday spaces. They are related to the walls and dimensions of a place by a blue line going over the hanging sculpture and further along the walls at a height of 130 cm. This blue line, from now on the recognisable attribute of Krasinski's body of work like the blue stripes of his artist friend Daniel Buren, is notoriously marking the circumstances and conditions of the social spaces his works appear in.

"I would stick it up in all sorts of weird places. If the strip is supposed to be everywhere, then let it be everywhere, not just in the Museum Sztuki in Lodz or Galeria Foksal. It might turn up in a butcher's shop around the corner...the strip is independent from everything and everybody, from Communism and Solidarity, you name it. It just trickles in spite of all."

(Edward Krasinski, 1997)

Although Krasinski's Interventions are very specific in the way they produce spatial illusions, their presence is at the same time elegantly casual. Often Krasinski executed a graphical design in black colour on the white surfaces of the flat boxes playing with irritating spatial effects. In other works like the two Interventions from 1981 and 1990 presented here, Krasinski produced cut-outs in the wooden construction sticking out into space, giving the objects itself a playful but also conceptual three-dimensionality. These Interventions are as much self-contained delicate and discrete objects as they are marking the space in a special way, artistically "stimulating a blowing range of opportunities provided by everyday life" situations.

The ceiling painting executed in situ by Monika Sosnowka shows a geometrical pattern which is inspired by public decors in Poland. Those decors often appear - side by side with propagandistic art works as arbitrary adaptations of a modernist form vocabulary. Traces of the real public sources are still vivid in Sosnowska's use of local and time-bound colours and e.g. in the choice of the architectural support of the painting.

The works by Eva Rothschild and Gary Webb are influenced by quite different traditions and associations. In his manneristically produced sculptures Gary Webb is playing with a whole range of historical moments of design and with sculptural stories which meet in his works in radically unfamiliar ways.

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The almost always black sculptures of Eva Rothschild are absorbed with meanings which are reaching beyond their own formal language and are at the same time strangely correspondent with the geometrical shapes of her mostly floor based pieces. Similar to what is enacted in the work of Katja Strunz, likewise her kinetically slow moving wall-sculpture in the show, one gets the feeling that formalism is here on the verge to other worlds and narratives outside of its historically witnessed self-containment.

Anja Schwörer's photogrammes seem comparably untouched by the historicity of this highly overworked genre of classical modernism although she uses the technique with a strictness adequate to its historical charge. Her photogrammes are not purely formalistic experiments. Far more they take grounds by their own enigmatic depth. Nairy Baghramian's ink-drawings and posters are like mind ruins, transforming hopeful as well as dark streams of consciousness of historical revolutionary aesthetic und utopian ideas in art into an individual graphical vision. In dreamlike sequences her motives suspended in timeless space, in which agitation appears as immanent and desirable. The fashion designer Ayzit Bostan has executed a dress for the show called ABC. Its subtle design reflects on avant-garde repertoires but radically to today conditions and standards. Finally Cologne based artist Margarete Jakschik contributed a photography showing a beach scenery of a "Kite Festival" at the coast of Netherlands full of discrete genre motives. It is the only work in the show having a starting point in a realistic style. But at the same time Jakschik's delicate compositional choices in the picture are opening and widening the general ways of thinking about abstraction.

Anke Kempkes