

Christian Vetter
Ecology of Painting

31.10 – 19.12.2015

Opening Friday 30.10.2015, 6pm

annex14 is delighted to be able to show a second solo presentation of works by Christian Vetter. In choosing the title "Ecology of Painting" the artist has deliberately adopted a counter-position to the kind of economic view often taken of painting. Yet although the death of painting has been proclaimed hundreds of times on the art market, it continues to satisfy aesthetic, decorative and economic needs. There painting is like a reliable and familiar constant that promises pleasing orientation amidst the splintered global offer of myriad facets of art.

As already mentioned, Christian Vetter has quite deliberately chosen another perspective. He understands painting as one language among many, as a vital counterpart with which he enters into dialogue. He also reflects on this language both in and with painting, less in the sense of an analytical painting and more in the sense of an anthropological constant, similar to the game. This may sound like an anachronism or an attempt to facilitate scope for experiments by which to explore the possibilities of languages in general through the example of a specific medium, and above all to keep those possibilities alive. This is quite unlike the omnipresent purely economic approach, for which languages are merely lucrative raw materials reduced to information.

This artist's particular approach is quite evident visually when we look at the recent rather small-format works done in 2015. Unlike in the previous exhibition at annex14 – in which the reduction to the colours black and silver played a vital role – the artist's palette, though still quite reserved, is now rich in contrasts as regards colours. No longer is there a formally dominant horizontal-vertical grid, but instead new free mesh-like structures. Using this reduced and carefully selected vocabulary, Vetter produces an atmospherically dense spatiality on the canvas that vexingly prevents the paintings from coming to rest. Unsettling as this may be, it enables us to participate in the process-like aspect of the act of painting as such, which is open and sometimes even like a balancing act. In more exaggerated terms, one could also understand it as experiencing how spiritual ideas become inscribed in matter, like in an alchemical experiment, transforming that matter so as to be themselves transformed.

Christian Vetter is also showing 11 lithographs done in 2015 as a complement and a link to earlier phases in his art – such as, for example, the 2013 installation *Malerei im Zeitalter des Kapitalismus* at the Helmhaus. These lithographs document the most important motifs of his black-and-white period, among which are the wall, the mirror or writing, i.e., figurative motifs that point to other facets of his engagement with painting, or to art as a language.

Elisabeth Gerber