VAN GRINTEN
DER GALERIE

Marcus Neufanger

Made for Cologne

17.04.2021–05.06.2021

The new show „Made for Cologne“, which Marcus Neufanger created as a holistic installation expressly for the Van der Grinten Galerie space, presents the entirety of the artist's 2020–2021painting production from the 'Books' work group. Together with the 'Books', the 'Portraits' and the 'Vanity Plates' comprise the three ongoing, ever-expanding blocks of work in the Marcus Neufanger oeuvre. Since the 90s, the artist has used these work series to explore as a continuum the point of engagement between an "extended" understanding of art and its "conventional" opposite.

Though the term "conceptual art" is often attributed Joseph Beuys, it actually stems from Marcel Duchamp who, in 1913/14 began to deploy his "ready mades", print works, fakes, theories, and stratagems of infiltration and occupation to override the sole claim to valid artistic expression held by the classic instrumentarium. In Duchamps work, idea and depiction were treated equally. This baton was taken up by conceptual artists of the 60s,

Van der Grinten Galerie
Ackerstraße 144
40233 Düsseldorf

notably Lawrence Weiner and On Kawara, contemporaries of Beuys, whose "social sculpture" marked the ultimate watershed, forever changing the scope of accepted artistic practice and product.

Marcus Neufanger's decision (likely a result of his personal background) to position himself in the field of a radical approach to fine art led him to a certain self-restriction, asceticism and concentration, which in turn caused him to become the constant user and resident of his own library, a seemingly endless source of ongoing inquiry and reflection.

In an interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, artist Franz Erhard Walther characterizes his love of artists' books and the exploration of them in a statement that can be aptly applied to Marcus Neufanger as well: *"Books are so important, especially because they can end up in the most improbable places. Much farther afield than exhibitions. I'm also interested in books as a medium, because artists put so much time, dedication and energy into making them – they are every bit as important as big shows"*. This topic represents a key facet of recent art history, in which themes and strategies of perception and effectiveness and intra-art-world reference systems are called into question. Furthermore, the book as such is also *the* abiding, universal and multifunctional object of democratization.

When the medium of painting is used to transfer typography and graphic design to the canvas, a common object of daily use such as a book develops a striking effect – due to the enlargement and as an abstractly organized surface of monochrome fields and letters. It is astonishing, how the simple act of enlargement allows the "picture" of a book cover to take on a life of its own. But that's not all: in his paintings Marcus Neufanger also transforms the aura and the physical presence of the original book into the physicality of his pictures – whether on canvas or cardboard – that arises from the painstaking and complex multi-layering of paint.

It is quite possible that a visitor to the exhibition will discover a favorite book and even a favorite picture.