

PILOTENKUECHE

INTERNATIONAL ART PROGRAM // LEIPZIG

ARCHITECTURE OF EXPERIENCE

Artists

Lily Cummins (Drawing, Installation; Darlinghurst, Australia)

Nathan Jay Brooker (Painting; Perth, Australia)

Simona Reisch (Photography, Installation; Vienna, Austria)

Curator

Vanessa Souli (Curator; Berlin, Germany)

What role does architecture play in the experiences we shape in our everyday life? How do our experiences in a space affect our emotions towards such spaces? Can experience have its own architecture? It might sound absurd, but this exhibition attempts to answer these questions by showing the work of three distinct, artistic voices. Each work carries its own memories of space, and yet within this context, in which one shaped reality is transformed to provide space for a new memory; the memory of new experience. The artists selected visualize different approaches to the conceptualization and realization of the experience of architecture, or more precisely, the 'memory of space' from very different angles of perception, absurdity, emptiness, and liveliness.

Cummins' work stands as a self-referential architectural work. Although linear storytelling is not a central practice in Cummins' work, her work in the show is assigned a narrative characteristic which manifests itself both in the liveliness of every single drawing, and in the positioning of it in relation to its larger, structural appearance. Her series of drawings are placed on the wall in a playful, choreographic fashion, thus emphasizing their inherent architectural features which spring from an emotional and experiential stimulus. Her work is inspired and influenced from her personal memories and experiences, yet manage to evade its autobiographical characteristics by emphasizing its emotional integrity, referring the viewer to, again, 'memories of experience' rather than personal thoughts and secrets. Additionally, the way the scenes in Cummins's work oscillate between the abstract and the figurative, the recognizable and the unfathomable, reinforces her character of mystery. The viewer is invited to rethink the work in endless ways, but only once the architecture of its hierarchy has changed from within.

Brooker's work functions as a witness and a deeper gaze into the everyday landscape people ignore. His work, reflecting the emptiness of 'unliveable' environments, is far from empty or void. The artist plays the role of the patient observer who wants to twist the meaning of things and give his own interpretations in the scene. Not satisfied with the populist notion of these areas as dead, Brooker re-creates these places with an overlay of artistic imagination in a way that these snapshots of reality become a piece of art themselves removed from their spatiality and temporality. This helps revert the stereotypical deserted image we carry for these spaces, and bring them back into dialogue with a new context and environment. Snapshots of architectural elements, which for us seemingly pass by unnoticed, for Brooker, are the source of his artistic creation, making them part of a new experience; an individualized experience, full of meaning in its own terms.

Reisch's practice is a close observation of structures and forms, with a constant effort to bring flat surfaces into life by redelivering them through different media. Combining materials such as wood, metal and aluminium, Reisch recreates the industrial atmosphere of her materials by altering the expectations of their functions. Instead of merely exhibiting new materials, she constructs scenes with them; an unprecedented 'experience of architecture' that opens new, surreal worlds. Reisch's practice consists of mixing impossible scenes together, creating a suggested, dystopian allegory of cityscapes, playing a reciprocal game between 2D and 3D. These surreal interventions are characteristic of her art are exemplified in this show, where she has composed a triptych of building façades, rendering them on hard aluminium plates which recall the contemporary accumulation of diverging aesthetics in generic cityscapes. What all these works have in common is an altered perception of how architecture can be a material for artistic creation and how it can affect emotional and physical experiences of space.

Text by Vanessa Souli