Installation view "Deflection" – Galerie CRONE, Berlin 2022

Installation view "Deflection" – Galerie CRONE, Berlin 2022

"template VII"
190 x 176 cm
Oil on MDF
2022

Installation view "Deflection" – Galerie CRONE, Berlin 2022

"template X"
203 x 263 cm
Oil on MDF
2022

Installation view "Deflection" – Galerie CRONE, Berlin 2022
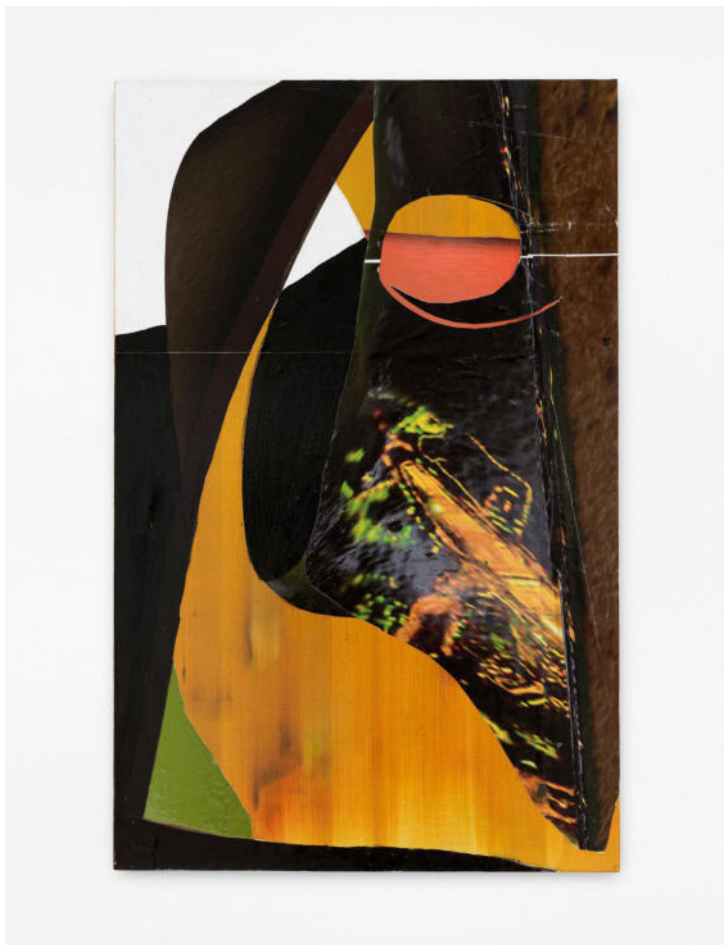
"template IX"
196 x 128 cm
Oil on MDF
2022

Installation view "Deflection" – Galerie CRONE, Berlin 2022

"template VIII"
205 x 140 cm
Oil on MDF
2022

2 untitled pieces from the series "images"
each 55 x 35 cm
Oil and collage on MDF
2022

Stefan Reiterer
Deflection

September 3 till October 8, 2022
Opening on Friday, September 2, 2022
6 to 9 pm

We are very pleased to present the exhibition *Deflection* by the young Austrian artist Stefan Reiterer in our Berlin gallery. On display are wall objects and large-scale textile installations that on the one hand evoke the symbiosis of the analog and the digital, and on the other hand "relocate" our perception and idea of spaces.

In structural engineering, "deflection" is the extent to which a part of a structural element deforms under a specific load. Looking at Stefan Reiterer's artistic work, one could assume that it embodies a similar extent and flexibly meets the "load" of his chosen medium: painting.

Reiterer deliberately avoids titles that are weighty with meaning. Instead, he numbers and names his works according to technical parameters and designations (*Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO; Templates* or *Texture Mapping*) in order, according to him, to "outsource the individual behind the painting." What thereby steps forward and hides behind the abbreviations and generic designations are intriguing entities that oscillate between abstract form and blurred landscape. Their hazy surfaces and fluid brushwork are reminiscent of Impressionist pictorial compositions. Curved edges and creature-like features draw parallels to Surrealist avant-gardists, illusionistic protrusions and bends mimic perfect trompe l'œils in oil.

Characterized by an intense engagement with analog and digital spaces and their manipulation, it comes as little surprise, however, that upon closer inspection breaks and glitches in the perspectives and subjects of Reiterer's paintings stand out. Within the distorted color landscapes, voids and fragments repeatedly project outward, interrupting the abstract maelstrom: a tiled house wall, the top view of a street, perhaps even a starry sky?

What we see here is a kind of cycle of repetition inherent in all of the artist's works: similar pictorial fragments and excerpts appear again and again, accompany him in different forms and shapes, often over long periods of time, and manifest themselves in multipart series of works. The palette of visual set pieces is diverse and refers to infinity. The elements refer to each other and interlock. One finds abstract structures, markings, and detailed aerial and satellite photographs, which Reiterer distorts digitally, prints out, paints, distorts again, paints again, and finally transfers to large wooden panels—cut to fit the respective form.

For his *Templates* series, the artist has been going one step further for several years, reworking existing analog collages in digital space. As 3D scans, the facsimiles there undergo a further transformation stage: now arbitrarily stretchable, rotatable, and distortable, they enter a fluid state in which different image references once again morph into one another and become a digital fabric that is completely independent of time and place. From the infinite view possibilities and perspectives of the 3D model, Reiterer selects a variant in the further process, which he then ties back to physical space using classical painterly means. As a mimicry of the likeness, digitally generated bends and distortions are repeated illusionistically, and color gradients and surfaces are translated in detail into analog oil paintings on wood. In this sense, the painterly results can be understood as further manifestations of that recurring cycle that fuses images into anachronistic vessels in which the digital informs the analog and vice versa.

In the exhibition *Deflection*, the artist positions the latest versions of his *Templates* series in an expansive backdrop of painted fabric panels (as part of the *Texture Mapping* series) that, in reference to the exhibition's title, arches across the floor of the gallery space like a deflection.

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Once captured in oil, works in this spatial setting appear like protagonists on a stage, using painterly devices and tools to bend and (per-)form the medium according to their own ideas.

The exhibition is accompanied by a collaboration with the Canadian artist Jeremy Bailey, who on the one hand takes up Reiterer's quest for the symbiotic linking of the analog with the digital, and on the other hand thematizes the upcoming fortieth anniversary of the Crone Gallery. Like Reiterer in his Templates, Bailey invites gallery visitors on a journey into virtual visual worlds that has its starting point in the real and leads into the imagination. A virtual reality app allows them to "beam" 3D-modeled avatars of gallery founder Ascan Crone and deceased artists, from the gallery program such as Hanne Darboven, Martin Kippenberger, Darrel Ellis, and Anne Loch into the exhibition.

By scanning QR codes integrated into Reiterer's floor work, the rendered figures appear on the cell phone display. They move through the gallery space and interact with the exhibition objects, which were also modeled and animated for the app.

In this way, Jeremy Bailey not only extends the exhibition into digital space, he also approaches it with a wink. Although Reiterer's works play the main role simply by virtue of their additional presence, they are under constant observation by the avatars from the gallery's longstanding program—which might refer humorously to the "burden" of art history as a self-referential commentary.

Stefan Reiterer was born in 1988 in Waidhofen an der Thaya in Austria and studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. His works are in the collection of the Federal Republic of Austria, the Belvedere Vienna, and the Landessammlung Niederösterreich. His works have been shown in numerous international exhibitions, including São Paulo, Mexico City, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, London, Prague, Berlin, and Porto. Most recently, Reiterer was involved in the *Tuesday@Secession* series at the Vienna Secession.

Jeremy Bailey was born in 1979 in Toronto, Canada, and is a self-proclaimed *Famous New Media Artist*. Bailey has performed and exhibited in various venues all over the world, from bathrooms in Buffalo to museums in Moscow. Morgan Quaintance (*Rizome*) says about him: "Since the early noughties Bailey has ploughed a compelling, and often hilarious, road through the various developments of digital communications technologies.". In 2021 Jeremy Bailey and Stefan Reiterer published their first collaborative project on youar.store.

Text by: Sonja-Maria Borstner

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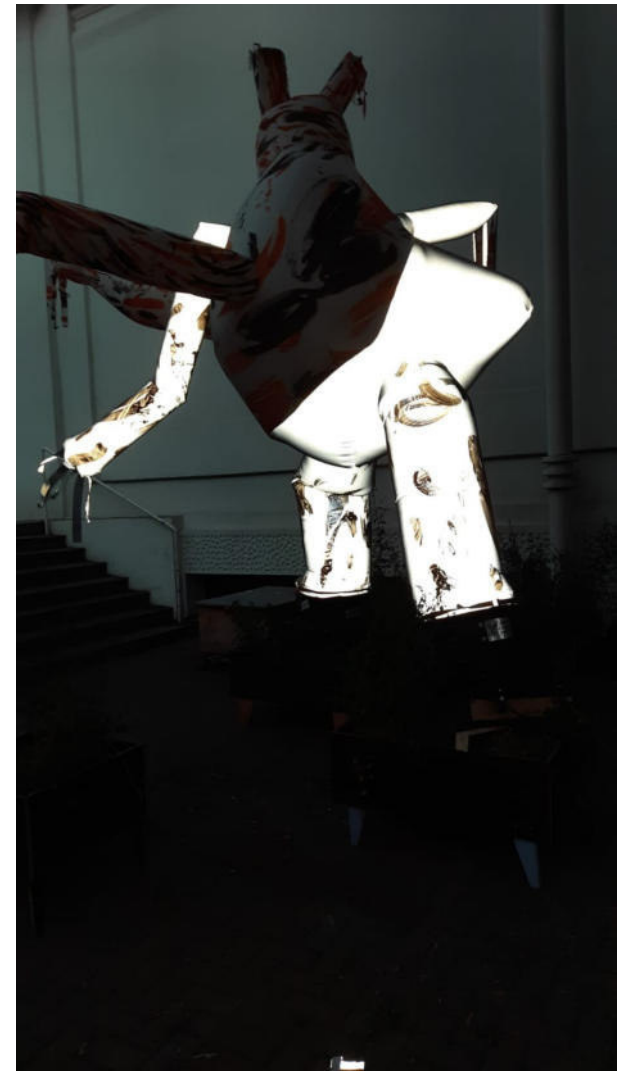
Installation view "Tuesday @ Secession" – Secession, Wien, 2022 (with Georg Petermichl)

Installation view "hot specki – hete spek" – Billytown, The Hague, 2022 (with Axel Koschier)

Installation view , Stereo Exchange, Copenhagen, DK
w. Bente Skjøttgaard , 2021

no title (*formants* series)
45x33x13 cm
Oil on 3D print (wood filament)
2020

no title (*formants* series)
23x15x10 cm
Oil on 3D print (wood filament)
2020

no title (*formants* series)
22x16x12 cm
Oil on 3D print (wood filament)
2020

Installation view "Displacement" – Galerie CRONE, Wien

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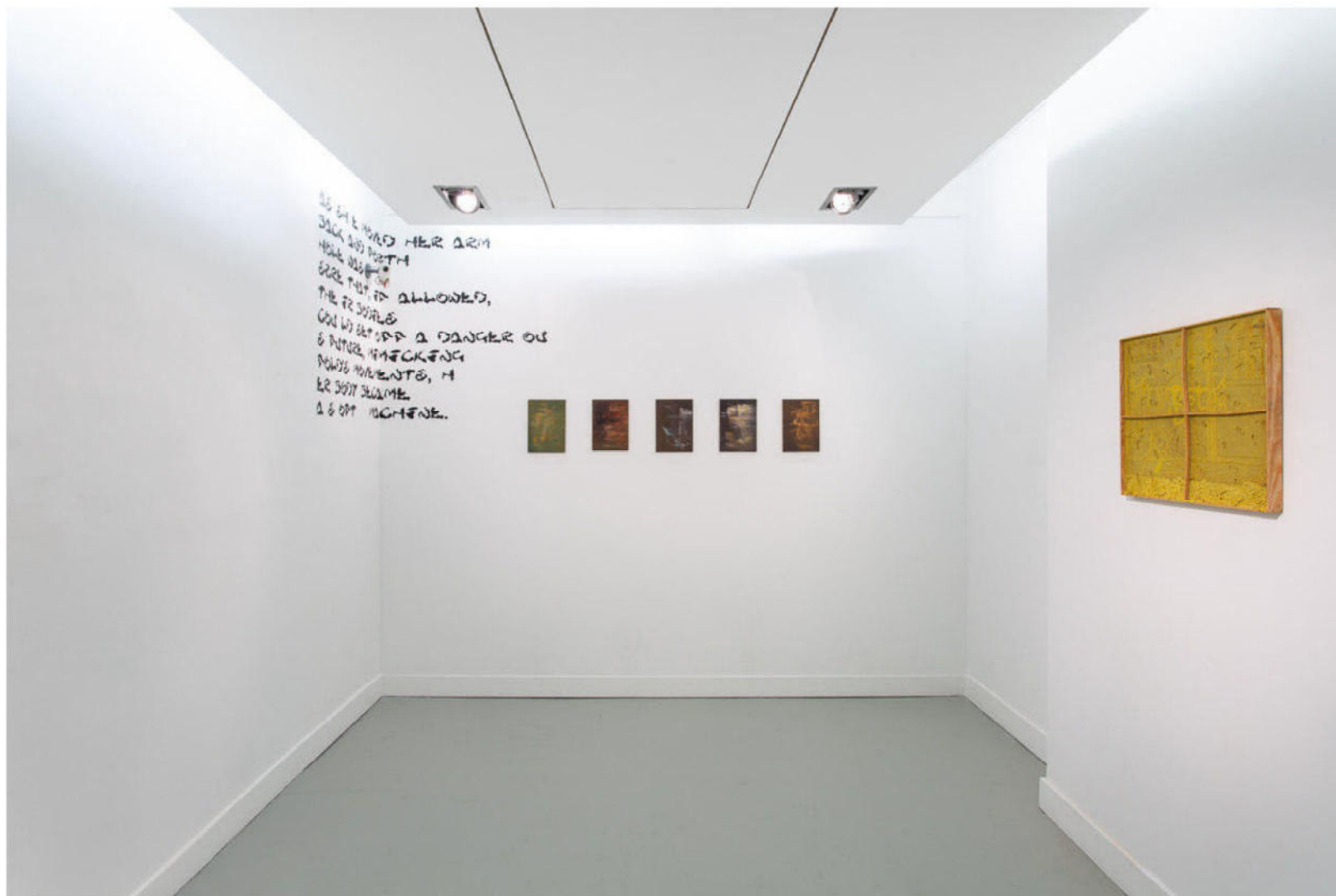Installation view "Displacement" – Galerie CRONE, Wien

Installation views "Displacement" – Galerie CRONE, Wien

Installation view "Ballast/Palast", Kunstverein Schattendorf
(works on the left: Luiza Margan)

Installation view "Hypersurface" – Austrian Cultural Forum, London

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Installation view "Hypersurface" – Austrian Cultural Forum, London
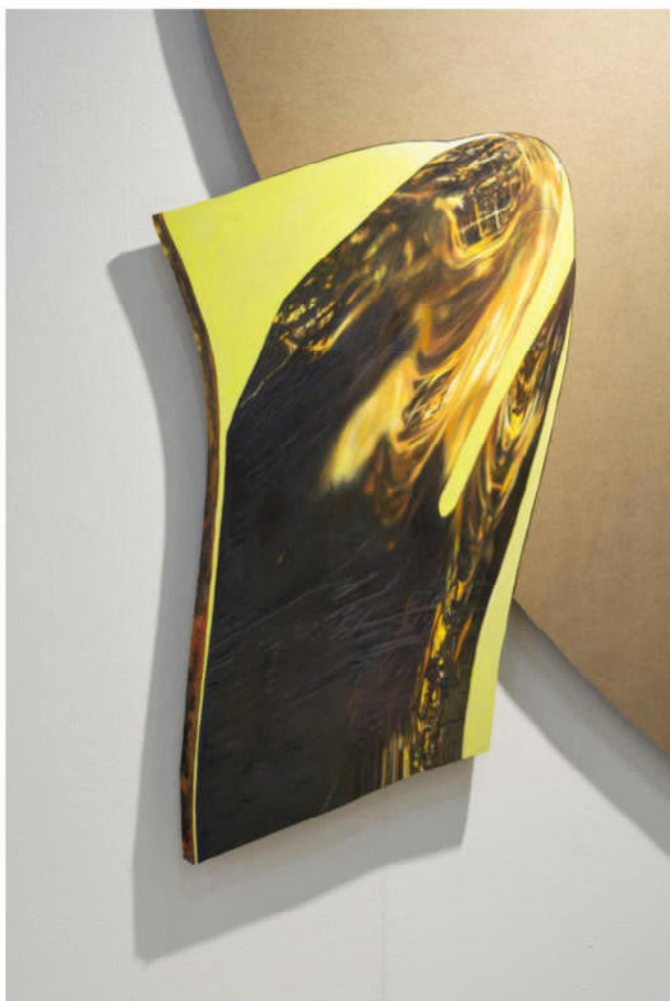(work on the left: Barbara Kapusta)

Installation view Zone1 – ViennaContemporary 2019

Installation view Zone1 – ViennaContemporary 2019

template 3
138 x 192 cm
Oil on MDF
2019

template 2
165 x 98 cm
Oil on MDF
2019

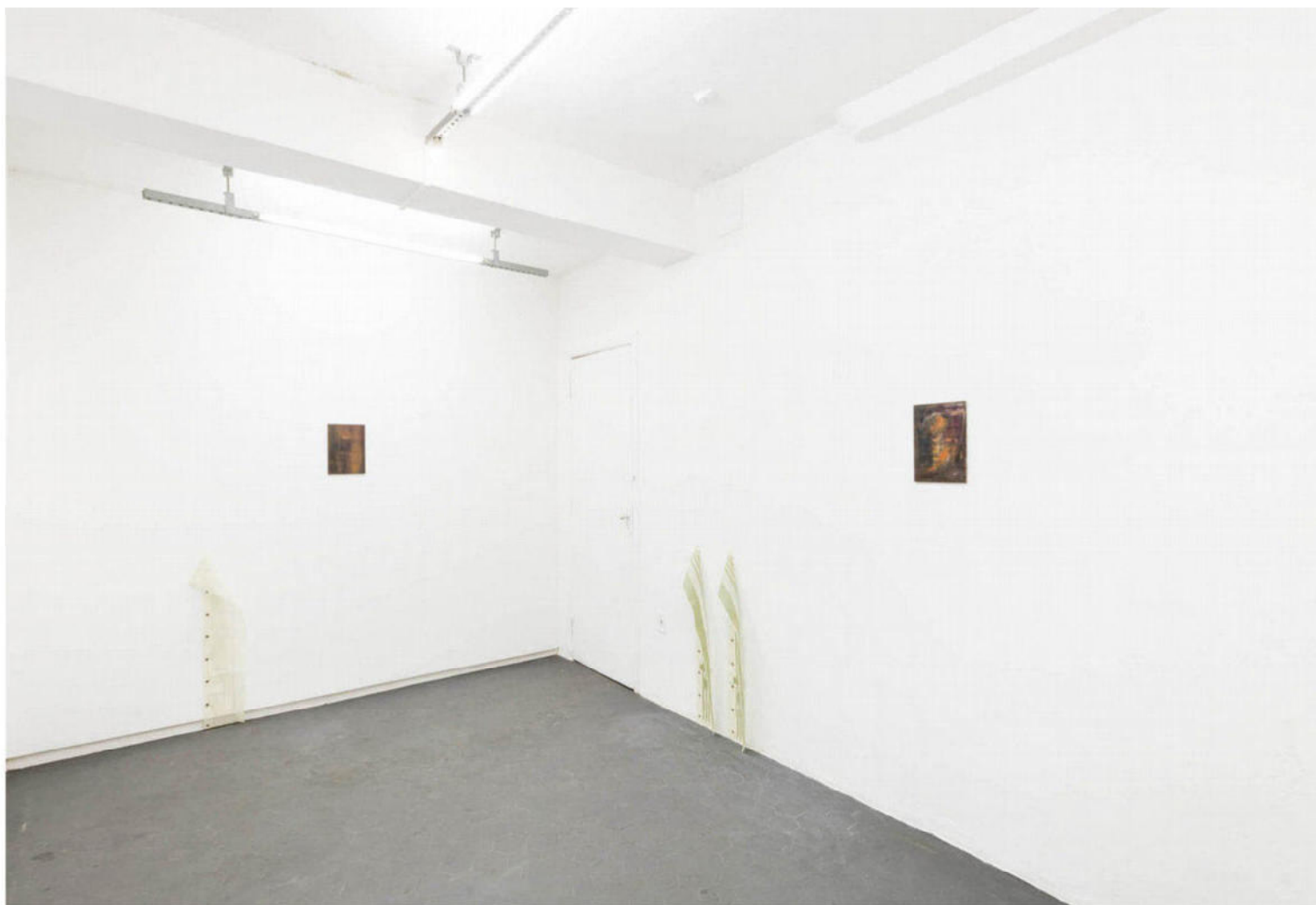Installation view Zone1 – ViennaContemporary 2019

Installation view "Über das Neue" – Belvedere 21, Vienna

Installation view "Über das Neue" – Belvedere 21, Vienna

no title (*images* series)
Din A4
Oil on MDF
2018

Installation view "Tud Cool" w. Axel Koschier – Projeto Fidalga, São Paulo

Installation view "Tud Cool" w. Axel Koschier – Projeto Fidalga, São Paulo

Installation view "Tud Cool" w. Axel Koschier – Projeto Fidalga, São Paulo

no title (*texture mapping* series)
Dimensions variable
Oil on canvas, wood
2019
Installation view 'Telestretch' – Ve.sch Kunstverein Vienna

no title (*texture mapping* series)
Dimensions variable
Oil on canvas, wood
2019
Installation view 'Telestretch' – Ve.sch Kunstverein Vienna

Partial Realities
Tracing positions in Stefan Reiterer's paintings

by Juliane Bischoff

The pictures that exist of Earth not only reflect the technical possibilities of their time, but have always functioned as a means of demonstrating control over territories.[1] They shape ideas about our lifeworld and the relationship of the self to its environment. In his paintings, Stefan Reiterer takes up the construction of images of the world and transports them into the picturesque space.

In 1858, French photographer Gaspard-Félix Tournachon, better known as Nadar, climbed into a hot-air balloon in Paris and rose to take the first aerial view of the landscape below. He was not only a pioneer of photography, but also of aviation, where he saw the future of human locomotion. Nadar's attempt was followed by numerous other attempts to depict the world through technical means: from camera-equipped pigeons,[2] rockets with recording equipment, aircraft and satellite imagery, to the iconic "Earthrise" - the first man-made image from outer space from the Apollo 8 mission created in 1968. This image was boasted by the US as a demonstration of its technical and territorial superiority.

At the same time, however, it was also appropriated by a countermovement that pursued a new, ecologically shaped understanding of the world, contrary to nation states. Starting in California in the 1960s, a new planetary consciousness that understood the world as a coherent system emerged. The central document was the "Whole Earth Catalogue", which used the "Earthrise" photo as its cover image. In addition to environmental justice and social criticism, the reification of technical progress crystallized in the vision of the global Internet was a central tenant of the burgeoning American counterculture.

In his painting practice, Stefan Reiterer deals with representations of space and its manipulation potential. He makes use of digitally generated images that claim to refer to geographical space. He is interested in translating the technical-constructed space of the digital into the analogous space of painting. In his paintings and installations, he inverts the logic of the virtual as an immaterial, but sensually tangible place by flattening the perspective or transferring the two-dimensional surface into space (see his series *Texture Mapping*). For most of his work, Reiterer uses screenshots of landscapes from Google Earth as a starting point. As a digital globe, Google Earth works with a 3D model, a patchwork of satellite images which map the planet. These are fragmented representations, composed of shots with different resolutions pulled from different sources and taken at different times on different devices – they are shot through with distortions and break lines. Before transferring these images to canvas, Reiterer reinforces their found alienations through digital cutouts and layered perspectives. Once rendered in oil, the found landscape then appears abstract with only a residue of the source image and much less of the referenced location. By transforming and manipulating the digital image through the process of painting, Reiterer draws analogy with the construction methods of mechanically reproduced images and their potentials to be manipulated.

NASA's "Earthrise" was rotated 90° before publication, so that Earth appeared as a rising planet on the horizon. The dramatic staging and titling should be read as a statement of confident ascending

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1 Cf. Ana Teixeira Pinto, "The Whole Earth: In Conversation with Diedrich Diedrichsen and Anselm Franke," in *E-flux Journal*, no. 45, May 2013, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/45/60114/the-whole-earth-inconversation-with-diedrich-diederichsen-and-anselm-franke/, last accessed: 12/11/18.

2 Cf. Jackson Krule, "The Origins of Aerial Photography," October 2014, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/photo-booth/origins-aerial-photography, last accessed: 12/11/18

progress. As the cover image of the "Whole Earth Catalog", the photo also carried a political agenda, albeit counter-positioned: a call to look back, to grasp the earth in its finiteness and to recognize the global interdependence of natural, social, and technical systems.

In terms of Reiterer's paintings, the ambivalent story of the "Earthrise" photo opens up possibilities to reflect on the use of imagery and its relation to reality. On the one hand, the photo was supposed to shape power politics and evidence, and on the other hand, it became a symbol of promise for a new cultural and ecological consciousness: "The image of the Blue Planet set the largest possible framework and claimed an overarching validity. On an abstract, formalistic level, it is the circle of the whole that replaces the line of the horizon; the circle, which, like zero, is a pure function in mathematics, and thus corresponds to the smallest unit of relation: as a place that since the 1970s equates the "self" as a relational function with the planetary relationship"[3].

From the visionary idea of a global Internet, which shaped the American counter-movement, digital network capitalism later emerged[4] - the basis for Google. In this context, the image material generated by Google Earth evokes associations with the "Whole Earth Catalog", which is itself a precursor of online search engines.[5] Indeed, the globe remains   a popular subject of internet companies and serves as the blue marble of Mozilla's Firefox's browser logo, black horizon of Netscape's Navigator, node in the 'S' of NCSA's Mosaic, and emblem of KDE's Konqueror.

Online found and partially estranged Google Earth images are the starting point for Reiterer's series "Images" and "Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO ". The underlying technology is closely motivated by a desire to survey the world, understand it, and finally acquire it. Maps were historically designed to allow navigation and discovery, eventually leading to the physical conquest of the world through colonization. Software-based digital maps are a realization of the ambitions of analog cartographic methods of tracing the landscape. Launched by the U.S. Department of Defense, the Global Positioning System (GPS) was allowed for civilian use in the 1980s and has since become everyday tool for everybody.

Already indicated in the title of the series "Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Pat. Navy, NGA, GEBCO", the satellite imagery that Reiterer draws from is a product of collaboration between Google, US military and scientific organizations. By generating, fragmenting and reassembling, Reiterer appropriates these images. Sometimes this happens as a precise copying, sometimes as a quick, playful gesture. Due to their high degree of abstraction, his paintings almost function as flip pictures, which can be seen either as landscapes or as abstracted forms, a dynamic that appears detached from the concrete landscape. By painting glitches and fractures, either found or digitally produced, the artist obscures once again any correlation to an objective "reality".

While the digital image remains changeable online and is constantly renewed, Reiterer halts this temporal flux with the tool of the screenshot. Juxtaposing day and night shots of the same landscape and combing them with found aerial photography, the artist revises the impression of faultless digital simultaneity through colliding different temporalities in one picture.

Whilst in the series "Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO" the artistic translation as paint on canvas is a meticulous and time-consuming process, the small-sized works of the series "Images" adhere instead something study-like and spontaneous. For the latter, Reiterer uses MDF as an

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3 Anselm Franke, „Earthrise und das Verschwinden des Außen," in *The Whole Earth. Kalifornien und das Verschwinden des Außen*, ed. Diedrich Diedrichsen/Anselm Franke (ed.): (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014) p. 13.

4 Cf Anselm Franke, „Earthrise und das Verschwinden des Außen," p.12.

5 Cf. Volker M. Welter, „From Disc to Sphere," Winter 2010/11, http://cabinetmagazine.org/issues/40/welter.php, last accessed: 12/11/18.

image carrier, a material that is available almost everywhere in the world. Thanks to the small format, the pictures are easy to transport: this independence and mobility are also reflected in the rapid application of color and the blurring, with which he wants to find a certain presence. Over the past four years, more than 100 paintings were made in this method. The artist was not only active in his studio in Vienna, but also Andratx (Mallorca) and Chiang Mai (Thailand). The conditions of these places were a prerequisite for the respective images, which vary in surface and application of paint.

Mobility is a central feature of our present, reflected in contemporary art's globally proliferation. Today, artists, curators, gallerists and critics are increasingly challenged to be on the road to emerging institutions, biennials, fairs and conferences in ever more remote locations. Moving through the world, our own position is always GPS-supported. Digital navigation technology has changed our perception of physical location: no longer just an area on the map, three-dimensional space is digitally reproduced around us as we seek orientation. Digital navigation devices with precise positioning not only enable real-time adaptation of the landscape, but also place the individual firmly at the center of their surroundings, the point from which the horizon is defined. This flowing synchronicity is based on a real-time generation of data which gives the impression of a perfect duplication of the world in digital space.

The belief in the reliability of ever-improving technical reproduction methods has also led to inversions between original and replication. For some years, a phenomenon has been observed that has become known as "Death by GPS": fatal accidents in which people ignored the signs in the real environment while driving or hiking in remote areas as they relentlessly followed the GPS information.[6] Although these are extreme cases, there seems to be a documentable shift in perception of the real world due to the mediation of computer generated images. Theoretician and curator Anselm Franke describes the consequences of this technologically conditioned shift: 'Reality is then no longer the measure of an imperfect image. Instead, the image becomes increasingly the measure of an always-imperfect reality'.[7]

In his paintings, Stefan Reiterer succeeds in translating discrepancies and breaks between reality and illustration. In addition, he considers motifs of mobility that confront him as a physical and virtual experience; given by increasing global circulation of people and information today. The blurring and smudging suggest passing landscapes during a journey that painters such as Claude Monet have been trying to capture since birth of modernity. The painter's eye looking out of the train or, as is more likely in Reiterer's case, out of the plane, seems to structure the works of "Images". Last but not least, they also recall recent works such as Gerhard Richter's paintings based on photographs. Here painting is an expression as well as a counter-tendency of the fugitive.

The virtual image of a global topography becomes concrete on the canvas and, as a photographic image, returns to the space of the digital. The glitched depictions of space may point to a shift in power dynamics, away from central control to distributed control, mediated through networks. Last but not least, the diffuse, unclear aspect of Reiterer's paintings also appears as a space for projection and possibility within a completely depicted, measured and "mapped" world.

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6 Greg Milner, "Death by GPS: are satnavs changing our brains?," in *Guardian*, June 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/jun/25/gps-horror-stories-driving-satnav-greg-milner, last accessed: 16/12/2018.

7 Anselm Franke, "A Critique of Animation," in *E-flux Journal*, no. 59, November 2014, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/59/61098/a-critique-of-animation, last accessed: 10/12/2018.