

Eberhard Bosslet

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EBERHARD BOSSLET

BARBARA FARBER AMSTERDAM

Eberhard Bosslet's artistic practice often involves active intervention in an existing situation. On the Spanish island of Tenerife, he has been realizing, for several years, site specific projects (Reformations) marking such things as the outlines of industrial ruins with broad, white bands of paint so that a three-dimensional reality assumed a linear, two-dimensional „straitjacket.“ At museum locations, Bosslet installed pseudo-functional ceiling supports made from steel tubes and objects from the immediate environment, such as wooden stools or steel cabinets and desks (Supporting Measures).

The six autonomous sculptures which Bosslet presents in this exhibition, along with two paintings, seem to be the silent witnesses of „intervention“ in an administrative, bureaucratic zone. The sculptures, with titles like Zahlen & Befehle (Numbers & Commands), Welthandel (World Trade) and Data Control, are constructed along established lines from the parts of steel and wooden file cabinets: four drawers are assembled with the aid of steel straps and wooden blocks into a rectangular, open form. These drawer sculptures are hung on the wall or placed on top of an empty, overturned file cabinet. In some works, the steel sheeting of the drawers, onto which the handles are fixed, are turned inward so that an „introverted“ construction results, while in others these sheets face outward and produce the rotating visual effect of a turbine. The steel straps which hold the parts squarely in place form networks of horizontals and verticals which are vaguely reminiscent of Mondrian's linear structures.

Despite their monotonous, standardized colors and constructivist intent, Bosslet's sculptures, by way of the estranged use of objects from the white collar domain, are not lacking in humor. This is different with the literally leaden „paintings“ (made from asphalt, lead, and zinc primer on galvanized sheet metal) which, in fact, deal with the same problems as the outdoor projects: the tension between the two-dimensional and three-dimensional. The image is determined by juxtapositions of schematic visual elements (ground plans) and illusionistic depictions of architectural spaces. Flat and, at the same time, full of illusionistic ambitions, these works are the embodiment of ambiguity. But whereas Bosslet manages to give expression to industrial materials in his site-specific projects and autonomous sculpture, his paintings lack sophistication – in their stern delivery they remain mute.

Martijn van Nieuwenhuyzen (Translated from Dutch by Beth O'Brien)