

THE SHADOW OF YOUR SMILE

18 July - 29 August 2015

A visit to the newly opened Whitney Museum In New York City: long queues of people waiting by the entrance, crowds of people everywhere, a babble of voices, no place to observe art, and then suddenly a space that could hardly be more contemplative and tranquil. There are many people here too, but no loud noises, no rapid movements, no pushing and shoving. It is the space of Minimal Art. All great American artists who are preoccupied with abstraction, monochromatic art and geometry are represented here. One of them is **PETER HALLEY**, who is showing two of his newest works in the summer exhibition of the Gallery Ruzicka. For the first time in 10 years new pictures by this artist can be seen in Austria. Ever since 1980 Peter Halley has been creating a stir with his geometric paintings in fluorescent colours. His works entitled *Cells* and *Prisons* symbolize the increasing geometric structures of the social space surrounding us.

In our exhibition **THE SHADOW OF YOUR SMILE** four guest artists and seven of the gallery's regular artists devote themselves to minimalistic contemporary painting and sculpture.

FRANCIS BAUDEVIN, from Switzerland, who concentrates the logos on the packaging of common medicinal products to their colour and form, makes his debut in Austria with three select paintings on canvas. He and his compatriots **STÉPHANE DAFFLON** and **PHIIPPE DECRAUZAT** take their orientation from a pioneer of visual communication: Max Bill. Following in his tradition of a universal pictorial language oriented towards graphic design, in their works they evolve their own non-representational vocabulary of form. In Philippe Decrauzat's work optical illusion and allegedly perceived spatiality take on particular importance. Making several references to op-art, the artist analyses the visual, psychological and content-related impact of form and colour on our perception.

An early hardboard picture by **IMI KNOEBEL** earths the powerfully coloured works of his artist colleagues **GEROLD MILLER**, **GERWALD ROCKENSCHAUB** and **RUTH ROOT**. One of the gallery's youngest artists, **HENRIK EIBEN**, is represented with sculptural wall objects created specifically for the exhibition. The materials he uses – wood, leather and aluminium – bring to mind everyday objects from our childhood. **KATJA STRUNZ**, who analyses folding as an artistic form of expression, also uses wood in her wall sculpture. With two current works **FRANÇOIS MORELLET**, 89 years old and thus the oldest artist in the exhibition but still displaying extremely youthful virtuosity, extends the material richness by red neon tubes, placed on a large, black square measuring 1 metre by 1 metre. On the central wall of the exhibition area **OLIVIER MOSSET**'s golden triangle welcomes and takes leave of visitors: geometric abstraction and mono-chromaticism here confront each other in their purest form. The title *Golden Triangle* also refers to the area between Laos, Thailand and Myanmar famous and notorious because of the trade in opium and heroin. All kinds of associations are possible when observing the works and each individual one has its justification. Once again the exhibition emphatically affirms that the possibilities of pictorial abstraction are far from exhausted.

Katja Mittendorfer

Salzburg, July 2015