

*Busy - Exhausted self / Unlimited ability*

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[...] The decision to perhaps not get involved with one's entire body and mind becomes a dangerous stance that hardly anyone who is not completely indifferent toward a certain status in society can allow him/herself. Doing only that which is "absolutely necessary" becomes a political issue, an attack against the status quo. This attitude has long spread to the "operating system art," in which artistic works are becoming increasingly perfect and exhibitions, thanks to contemporary exhibition design, propagate overfulfilling obligations. The universalization of means leads to a perfection obscuring the true situation. Precisely this premise of totalization and invisibility of the means as well as eradicating mistakes leads to attributing a special status to the exhibition display. Artist Christoph Meier, who is responsible for the display of the thematic show *keine zeit*, questions the performative and narrative potentials of the presentation formats themselves. The display does no more than what is absolutely necessary. The sheet metal sectional frames that normally support the white walls stand freely and are covered with dry walls only where they are necessary to support further works of the show. The dry walls are not smoothed, the material remains rough and gray, the rounded edges are visible. It appears unfinished, yet is ultimately thoroughly pragmatic. What we have is an approach serving a rational purpose that does only what is absolutely necessary – which in this case entirely suffices to additionally refer to the structures of present-day overcompliance. Hence, one can regard the display as an Arte Povera object, in a time that is more reminiscent of minimalist Rococo, be it in formal terms or in regard to the self-exploitation and self-interpretation of the self.

At the same time, the display becomes a void that takes on the function of newly formulating its surroundings. Voids become productive the moment they appear for just a short while, thus becoming the subject matter of negotiation and speculation. [...] For Christoph Meier, also two other pivotal aspects play a role. On the one hand, he reflects this modern display in the frame of a modernist architecture built for an Expo, which is characterized by an enormous atmosphere of departure arising in face of the newly discovered nuclear energy and space travel. This architecture stands in stark contrast to a society that in the year 2012, exhausted by its own productivity and its own narcissism, is gradually reaching its limits, of which no one knows in which direction they are bound to open again. Contemporary art has changed, architecture inevitably hasn't followed suite, so that a discrepancy between architecture and theme arises. But this makes it exciting again, because one is forced to consider what has actually happened to us since the 1950s, since early and classical modernism.

The second aspect lies hidden in the basic assumption of service. Here, the artist is a service provider for the museum and the curator. It is a model based on division of labor, in which the artist is to deliver something that is already predetermined or whose framework conditions have already been defined. The artist doesn't resolve this in a formal manner, however, but via the material that, as already mentioned, reproduces the unfinished, the roughness, the side of art, then, that at least in museums is seldom shown. What is more: Meier intervenes. He not only provides a service, but intervenes in the work of the curator, he even intervenes in the installations of the other artists: Olaf Nicolai is not given a white wall but a sheet metal scaffolding for hanging, Michel Majerus a window pane, and Verena Dengler has to accept not receiving a white plinth. But alongside the interventions there is also the reservation of a Bartleby, who enters the firm a bit pallid. The display takes up the form of the façade, yet it does not impose itself with its gray, partially transparent structure. A tension arises between the two poles of reservation and actual work demand. This ambivalence, which also corresponds with the theme of one's own bodily sensitivity in the neoliberal society of the twenty-first century, has no outlet, but is a void and refusal standing as a statement in space, a statement the viewer cannot avoid. The physical discomfort is intentional. Parts of the glass façade is covered to different degrees with sun protection foil, which also induces a bodily effect. The outdoor area of the museum is perceived in different shadings, with the effect on the body ranging from pleasant to repulsive, from warm to cold. The institutions of the self are subjected to different moods that must be questioned and that also reflect the odyssey surrounding this display, which during the different phases of the project was subject to great fluctuations and discussions, and for precisely this reason was able to develop into a highly independent and distinct position. [...]

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