

Tobias Hantmann Staying with the Pictures

Opening: Friday, November 30th, 2018 7pm, Hermann-Levi-Saal in the townhall
Duration: 01.12.2018– 17.02.2019
Curated by Dr. Nadia Ismail

Official greeting
Dietlind Grabe-Bolz
Mayor of the City of Gießen

Introduction
Dr. Nadia Ismail
Director Kunsthalle Gießen and curator of the exhibition

The artist is present

Tobias Hantmann (*1976 Kempten) challenges visual perception and reflects the image concept in the exhibition *Staying with the Pictures*. The artist, who lives both in Düsseldorf and Berlin, is driven by the question – what is important enough to be painted? What happens in the relationship between form and content? Is the choice of medium already an unspoken promise to what is depicted? Beginning with these questions Hantmann's work develops from them, as he describes himself as a painter. Nevertheless, the exhibition does not include classically painted canvases. Instead, framed velour carpets – for which he has attracted great attention – hang in various formats on the walls of the Kunsthalle Gießen. At first glance, the velour pictures appear to look like monochrome paintings. By simply raising up and pressing down the carpet pile he draws complex, mostly figurative motifs that confuse and confound. In contrast to painting, where the paint bonds permanently to the surface, his works are always in danger of disappearing. Hantmann's motifs could be removed at any time, and could be deleted with just one hand movement. How stable is a formulation that can be completely undone? Or is it precisely this loose inscription that creates a new freedom for seemingly fixed motifs? He takes as an example a series of enlarged crib motifs, for him they function as velour pictures, but he would not accept them as classical oil paintings. He gives the omnipresence of the images as a reason – scenes of the birth of Christ already depicted in countless paintings appear almost worn out through frequent use. For Hantmann the carpets are fragile, light-changing drawings and not another painterly manifestation.

What should, what can a picture represent?

Inspired by the work of the American conceptual artist Robert Barry, whose goal was to make immaterial reality a subject of discussion, Hantmann poses questions about the expectations and possibilities of images. For his *Inert Gas Series* and *Radiation Pieces* from 1969, Barry photographed gases or radioactive material escaping into the wild. The resulting image was, amongst others, the photographic recording of nothing more than a bush, as the gases remained invisible. Did the photographs then fail in their intention? The bush from Barry's photograph becomes the main motif of Hantmann's velour work *Inertgas*, while the ephemeral nature of the gas is reflected in the material composition of the carpet. The choice of the medium and section generates an expectation. Potentiated by the presentation, by the hanging of a picture, the promise of an image and the assertion that it is one already emerges. At the same time it entails disappointment if the expectation is not fulfilled. What remains is the question. The subsequent media reflection on the ephemeral that is inherent in the material itself, is processed by Hantmann diversely in his work.

Despite the theoretical discourse that largely accompanies Hantmann's work, his compositions aggressively celebrate beauty, simplicity and craftsmanship.

A new work complex: *The Light of the World*

The starting point for the installation *The Light of the World*, which will be shown for the first time at Kunsthalle Gießen, is a photographic slide projection revealing the interior of a room through whose window light falls across the floor and onto the wall. This seemingly analog 'snapshot' shows a reconstruction made with Cinema 4D graphics software of the delivery room at the moment of the artist's birth. In order to begin this reconstruction extensive research took place into the various conditions that prevailed on 31.12.1976 at 13.41 in the women's hospital on Robert-Weixler-Straße 50 in Kempten in the Allgäu. It included meteorological data such as weather and light conditions and the position of the sun and architectural data such as detailed building plans, the orientation of the building and the materials used for the interior furnishings. Tobias Hantmann stages the essentially arbitrary combination of time and place as a 'prototypical situation', focusing on light and materiality.

The exhibition *Staying with the Pictures* combines image forms that Tobias Hantmann has returned to and explored for years in his artistic practice and the new images that have developed from them. In the interplay between staging and material, all of his works address their own conditions and question the status of the image.

Beyond analysis and experiment, the velour creations prove to be fascinating portals into visual worlds full of suggestions, allusions and references. By deciphering the images, the viewers actively enter these parallel worlds.

10 limited photographic editions will be made available to coincide with the exhibition. A catalogue of the exhibition will be realized in 2019 with the support of the Kunstfond.

Tobias Hantmann (1976 in Kempten in the Allgäu, lives in Düsseldorf and Berlin)
He studied Painting at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf and at the Hochschule der Künste Berlin. He teaches as a guest professor at the Kunstakademie Münster, since 2015.*

Sponsors and supporters

Stiftung Kunstfonds
Ehrenamt Gießen e.V.

In cooperation with
Hein-Heckroth-Gesellschaft Gießen e.V.

Programme

Panel discussion

Thursday, January 24th 2019, 7pm

Tobias Hantmann, Dr. Nadia Ismail, Dr. Uta Ruhkamp, N.N.

Reading

Friday, February 15th 2019, 7pm

In commemoration of the 30th anniversary of Thomas Bernhard's death

Hermann Beil will read from his work *Old Masters*

(Organised by Hein-Heckroth-Gesellschaft Gießen e. V.)

Guided tours with the curator

Thursdays, 5-6pm: 06.12.2018 + 17.01.2019

Art education

Art education in individual conversations

Saturdays 4-6pm: 08.12. + 22.12.2018 + 05.01. + 19.01. + 02.02. + 16.02.2019

Thursdays 2-4pm: 13.12.2018 + 10.01. + 31.01. + 07.02.2019

Art and coffee

with Fabian Stein and Ehrenamt e.V.

3-5pm: 04.12.2018 + 15.01. + 12.02.2019 (participation fee 2,50 Euros)

Registration at kunsthalle@giessen.de

Entrance is free to all events.

New Opening times:

Tuesdays to Sundays 10-6pm

Public holidays: 24.12. + 25.12. + 26.12. + 31.12.2018 + 01.01.2019