

Gallery Becomes an Asphalted Parking Lot

Jürgen Offermann is Showing Women Art

Bianca Rühle

What does it mean, if a Cologne gallery is suddenly discovering women? As women artists. Does it mean that the waves that liberate the "suppressed talent" have bypassed Jürgen Offermann at this time? Yes, the dealer Offermann has his own ideas when it is about to inform, to put accents. This was already the case when he was one of the first Cologne dealers to show installations-with male artists. Paradoxically, he doesn't mind the gender of the artists when he announced that he is going to show for a period of one year exclusively women projects. What matters is the question whether the objects fit his concept of art and quality. Offermann doesn't care to be just a gallery for installations. The dealer says: "I have discovered more the idea of installations with male than with female artists. And this way of expression interested me at the time in particular. Now, everybody is talking about it and the next Documenta is supposedly putting it at the center. Therefore, a lot is today called "installation". Whenever somebody puts a nail in the wall, people start thinking whether it could be an installation". The inflation of installations is therefore, a reason to look for alternatives and new perspectives in studios of female

artists. Offermann sees no problem to change from installations of Markus Ambach, Jürg Geismar or Mathies Wagner to knitted images by Heike Tibes. He sees it as an enrichment of his gallery program. This program he always likes to be seen with the same easiness as he wants art and its execution to be easy viewed and received. The delicate difference between real kitsch and artistic kitsch characterizes Offermann's understanding that art emerges where it is playful. These premises, the dealer finds most fulfilled by female artists. But the following exhibition program isn't just putting up for discussions, typically female expressions like "embroidery-art". From New York comes the artist Devon Dikeou, who will convert the entire gallery space into an empty parking lot while the American Janine Antoni will again worship to the apparently-traditional female media with a lipstick work. These two examples are already showing the tense relationships that characterize female artists from Europe and America who Jürgen Offermann is going to show this year in a concentrated way. Gallery Offermann, Lütticherstr. 13. open Tues. through Fri. 3:30-6:00, Sat. 12:-2:00.

IRONY AND IRRITATION

OFFERMANN'S WOMEN

The artists Janine Antoni (born 1964) and Devon Dikeou (born 1963) are plunging the visitors of their exhibition at gallery Offermann in a changing bath of feelings/sentiments. Their "premier" contribution is indeed singular at least what concerns their irritation and irony. Janine Antoni's installation is about the supposedly typical female and the typical male hygiene: In the first room lie about 100 white paper tissues with red lip stick imprints of the artist on the floor. The throwing away tool/utensil as an expression of female identity?

Nine Hundred Toilet Stones.

The male counter part in the court is making you breathless: 900 blue toilet stones, spread out over the concrete floor in a painterly fashion are stinking in a literal sense to the skies. A banal idea? Or a genius joke? In any case Janine Antoni managed to characterize the daily business through a provocative exaggeration and therefore to question reality. This is also the aim of Devon Dikeou: Everybody who passes through the court of perfumes without any damage, finds himself in the following two gallery rooms on a parking lot floor. With yellow lines the artist painted a segment of an American parking lot on the floor, specially wide for US-cars. Striped off its usual dedication and function this daily "space" too, appears as absurd. If it is the task of art to question the "normal" and to trouble the beholder, then, these two women fulfill perfectly well this task (Gallery. Offermann, Lütticherstr. 13. Open through 6/29/91 Tues.-Fri. 3:30-6:30, Sat.12:00-2:00) —EvS

Kölner Stadtanzeiger 30. 4. 91

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Unlike the recent Gramercy International Contemporary Art Fair, this "alternative," new-art, young-art extravaganza is less about art than about energy: so don't come looking for the best and the brightest. Instead, you'll find the kookier bush leagues and interesting fringes: rich kids and poseurs, video jocks and cyber-freaks, DJs and artworld wannabes — plus more than a few legit downtown gallerists looking woefully out of place in the bombed-out office building. Best of the latter are Steffany Martz on the 25th floor and Fotouhi Cramer on the 28th; but head on down to the 24th for the outer limits, like UP & CO's mind-blowing asphalt parking lot, and to 13 for the Cascade Lounge — a nightclub with video theme rooms (including one by Jennifer Steinkamp), smack in the middle of Wall Street. —David A. Greene