

Marcel Frey - Post Function

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In his work Marcel Frey places focus on items of everyday use as well as on "design" objects. The things found by him already possess a form before they become part of his works. By drawing on and reacting to found items Frey examines the question of methods of artistic production and decision making. He alters the items, repurposing, painting over, replicating or creating casts of them. In his exhibitions he composes ensembles or interiors that explore the interaction of the objects as a single unit and that illustrate the artistic potential of the items found in our surroundings.

There are works of art that have an especially close affinity to our everyday lives. They seem to be about life itself because they place focus on a realm of life that we are well familiar with - or because art, generally speaking, is about "something".

In the works of Marcel Frey everyday objects are present less as part of our world and more as the fruits of an aesthetic labor. These mundane objects can be understood as a reservoir of forms that Frey analyzes, de-contextualizes and anonymizes. A precondition for Arthur C. Dantos's claim that art is "about" something could very well be that art itself is not part of this "something", does not belong to this world or to this reservoir. In this way a clothes wrack, a shelf or a slab of concrete as we see them in Frey's art all become works about their sources. They have been alienated from their original use and appear as aesthetically perceived objects in the context of an exhibition. The bridge to our experienced world has nevertheless been created and all actions associated with the objects are present in the exhibition space.

The alienation of the object from its intended use yields two paradoxical things: a distance through which the object is aesthetically perceived and a closeness in that an affective connection to the role played by the object in our everyday lives persists. Marcel Frey plays with the ambivalence between the simple categorization of the objects to their original use and their alienation from this use. Painting over, replicating and making casts are all methods of his interventions. Often the interventions are minimal - something is taken away or simply turned around. Like different gradations of an aesthetization of our everyday lives, this strategy functions as a critique of both design and art. By painting them over in matt black the objects in Frey's installations lose their materiality and become homogenous forms. Furniture, ceramics, decorative accessories and textiles are assigned the same value and placed together in a spatial relationship to one another.

Marcel Frey's works transfigure the conventional. They stylize the tools of everyday life even as they render an homage to our sense of sight. In their exploration of everyday objects our vision is sensitized and the objects themselves emerge as the real protagonists of the installations.

Tido von Oppeln

Marcel Frey (born in 1980 in Mönchengladbach) lives in Karlsruhe, Germany. He studied at the State Academy of Fine Arts Karlsruhe and completed post-graduate studies under Silvia Bächli. Solo exhibitions have been held at the Städtische Galerie Karlsruhe, the Kunststiftung Baden-Württemberg (Stuttgart) and he has been included in numerous group exhibitions in such spaces as the Museum Biedermann (Donaueschingen), Kunsthaus Baselland and Kunsthalle Exnergasse (Vienna).

Galerie Thomas Fischer

Potsdamer Str. 77-87, Haus H
10785 Berlin +49 30 74 78 03 85
mail@galeriethomasfischer.de

