

Media release

Susanne Hofer

Tapeten und Porzellan (wallpaper and porcelain)

Exhibition: 13 February till 21 March 2009

Opening: Thursday, 12 February, 6–9 pm

The artist will be present at the opening.

Places of daily human activities as well as denotations and ritualized events of these spaces are the origin of Susanne Hofer's work. In her compact video installations, projections and one-channel videos she sounds out interactions between inside and outside, private and public, individual gestures and culturally formed patterns; she questions differently determined spatial and topographical situations and moments in reference to their conditions and their basic potential in creating identity. In each of her works she produces, at the same time, different "realities", reveals their medial and material constructs and puts their parameters up for discussion.

In her current solo show Susanne Hofer presents three new works that are characterized by a precise interleaving of spatial and reality models and a sophisticated "iconicity". In the synchronized video double projection "Tapeten" (2009, engl. *wallpaper*) the camera focuses part of a damaged wall that is being renovated and colored. As soon as the part captured by the camera is painted, the camera zooms out and displays the whole room. Scratching, sanding and the sound of the brush painting the wall constitute a continuous audio track. The artist rhythmizes the recorded work process, particular moments stay for some seconds, therewith the layering of the peeling color, wallpaper rags and the new coat become visible in their texture and materiality, but also as a picture. The perception of surfaces and spaces topple into one another, the colored framing on the wall is not always even, sometimes planted on wall breakups or corners. Transitional zones are created with each change from fix close-up to wide frame; intermediate spaces that open out into a spatial decipherable puzzle picture at the very last moment – a long shot in which the colored spot is just a sign among others. Hofer continues these innervisual interleavings by interlacing the medial space of illusion and the spatial presentation: the spectator is inside two room projections while their imagined spatiality breaks open and encroaches the real space, the corner situation in the gallery. The recurrent activity – the renovating and painting – suggest an appropriation that is never finished, it is rather a temporary indication, a partial acquisition.

The video "Porzellan" (2009, engl. *porcelain*) is presented on a monitor and has a conceptual affinity with the formerly described work. A derelict, deserted residential area, on the floor leftovers of civilization: through the windows of some houses, one can see two hands sticking together porcelain fragments with tape. During the video, the pile of repaired dishes mounts successively, blocking the view through the panes. While inside the houses something functional is created by mending broken things, the exterior is unaffected by this activity. Affectionately, almost a bit nostalgically, Hofer records the remains of a past way of life. She penetrates this space-time structure punctually by precisely mounting sequences; she puts over several interiors into the present and inscribes their

tracks in the video pictures. Apparently accidental moments attest an eternal interaction: exterior signs of past destruction encounter preservative, regenerative gestures inside when i.e. piles of dishes seem to be support a tree that fell on the roof. These are the hinges by means of which Hofer softens the frame's constitution, accentuates its bizarre character and interweaves the differently conditioned space-time models into a fascinating point of time.

"Vorstadt" (2008, engl. *suburb*) is a form of video installation that is particularly characteristic for Hofer's artistic position: framing a specifically illusionistic situation while revealing the creative process and displaying it. Sunrise and sunset behind a skyline are created by projecting a video on an accurately arranged assemblage of material. The closer the sun approaches the zenith, the more articulate becomes the architectural landscape. The "sunrays" gently caress the stacked objects, dip them in a warm golden light, but also illuminate the installation's material setting, reveal them in the half-light. Hofer successively exposes the romantic topos she staged herself. Coevally, she refers to the surrealistic credo that the encounter of objects of most different origins is incidental and results in beauty beyond comparison. It is the momentum of the unexpected, the absurd, the erratic that constitutes this beauty and is also inherent in Hofer's video installation. And, thus, as a continuation of Lautréamont one could phrase: « Il est beau comme la rencontre fortuite sur une boîte en plastique d'une bouteille de bière et d'une perceuse » (engl. It is beautiful as the chance encounter of a plastic bottle, a can of beer and a drill).

Irene Müller, February 2009

Susanne Hofer, born 1970, attended the Hochschule für Gestaltung Luzern from 1990 until 1995. Since 1997 she completed various stays abroad and won different awards and studio grants, i.e. for Berlin, Paris, Chicago and New York. She received several awards and prices: In 2005 (together with Urs Hofer) a grant of the city and the Kanton of Lucerne as well as the Kulturwettbewerb Wirtschaft und Kultur Willisau for the project "die Stellvertreterin". In 2002 the Preis der Kunstgesellschaft Luzern. In 2001 and 1996 she received a grant of the city and the Kanton Lucerne. And, together with Marianne Halter, in 1998 the scholarship VideoOst and in 1996 the Preis der Videowerkschau Schweiz at the Viper in Lucerne.