In the Studio

Thilo Jenssen, Vienna

»Hospitals, automobile tune-ups, and nail design have their own codes and rules.«

This Jenssen's works incorporate sign structures, pop culture, and physical states of emergency. Existing material is subject to a degree of preparation to the point where a fragile perfection is attained requiring the necessity for protective and supporting brackets. The studied sculpt-painting approach of Thilo Jenssen's work encompasses a variety of media, yet employs a painterly approach that may result in what may be perceived as an installation.

Thilo, you studied art and philosophy in Kassel and after your move to Vienna registered in the painting class of Gerald Richter. What motivated you to study these two complementary fields?

Although I had already studied sculpture at the Art Academy Kassel with Florian Slotawa and Christian Philip Müller and graduated in art and philosophy, my decision to study painting was based on the fact that painting is one of the pure painting class, in order to further deepen my painterly practice in a new city and a different context.

Despite your focus on painting, at first glance your works appear more sculptural than pictorial.

I have repeatedly worked and experimented with a variety of media and my work sometimes appears sculptural, sometimes pictorial. I see my work as a hybrid or "displayed" for the images which become an integral part of the work and enable me to treat them differently in space. This may suggest an installation, but I consider the pictorial aspect of the work to be paramount, which I further reinforce. According to the positioning of the works in their reflective as well as thermo-active picture surface, the space and the immediate environment for that matter, receives further meaning.

Can you describe how the work process generates the sculptural approach in your painting?

My paintings develop in a very processual way. I follow a special procedure which I developed over the years. I start with a "base" which I then treat as a repeatedly call it "field" surface is obtained which appears almost "like a screen". The application of the paint and the sanding and lifting creates an "underpainting" which appears sometimes almost like a "ghost image". These images take on something physical, and the cracks and tears and other implemented fringes appear that achieve the production process making it visible. The paintings are then given a final layer of varnish or polyurethane. Find interesting and they become the raison d'e further works.

How did this work process develop?

I have been working in this way since the beginnings of painting and include visual impressions of processes. A significant influence was the "Pirelli Calendar" commissioned of the 1980s in Los Angeles where a group of artists around John Baldessari photographed the production process of a calendar in a Mexican industrial works, especially the automobile industry, to produce objects inspired by Californian culture.1 Iron and lacquers and industrial paint to make monochromatic photographs of the "Pirelli girls". I was a child at the time of my generation or are simply based on everyday observations.

How exactly are you incorporating pop culture and everyday phenomena in your work?

I work a lot with "found elements". In pop- and sub-culture, I refer to linguistic codes and rules, which are then implemented in the context of my paintings. For example, in some of my works I used parts by Dennis Tyler and second covers by Ivor Madden. Art historical references such as the work of Ellsworth Kelly and Frank Stella are also of interest to me. The "Hospitals" are important to me, and in that context I am interested in the essentialism of public architecture and other structures in terms of graffiti or skateboarding. This is a culture in which the digital access to systems and in forms of action I find very exciting.

Philosophical traits of thought like those of Michel Foucault can also be discovered in your works. How do you deal with these philosophical aspects?

I don't incorporate complex, philosophical theories in my works, but I do use philosophical approaches to deal with the world around me. I'm concerned with physical components seeing the human being more as one that is always dependent upon support.

Many references in your work, regardless of whether it is pop culture or a philosophical approach, are to be found in the context of the work. Which role do these two components play?

Pop culture and philosophical and everyday experiences always have a great influence on my work. That is especially evident in my exhibitions Rem (Energy and Restless Logic. Both shows have the same point of departure, but Rem (Energy) is more focused on the physical state of the human being and the genre of sculpture, the Cigarettes from 2017, which alludes to the characteristic Viennese ashtrays one finds in the public space. The way the objects are read and perceived in the context of the exhibition Restless Logic, which is a mixed configuration or sculpture of structures and phenomena say of a dual then context and other generate very different or even contradictory associations. Sometimes I use the same or similar elements in different ways, for example, I use crates, cones, and bags. It is very interesting to deal with it playfully, is until have in one's own practice.

Besides Rem (Cut) did you also interested in "emotional" support measures? Rem (Cut) is a work that I created in the context of my exhibition Restless Logic and have constantly in the recession and result certainly also exist in emotional and existential areas. However, it is important to me that I do not make a work that is too personal, but that I can also communicate and work with physical components seeing the human being more as one that is always dependent upon support.

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Before beginning your residency at Wittgensteinsee, you were the recipient of Frist Bid yourself. The experience was incorporated in your art. Can you tell us about this?

It is the weeks before my residency was in Vienna. I relate my big body during a walk in the Vienna Central Cemetery. So an unfortunate circumstance an relative to the Frist Bid yourself. I was then in the Wittgensteinsee for the residency at Wittgensteinsee beginning slightly later. I relate in the accident and the Frist Bid yourself. I was then in the Wittgensee for the residency, inspired by my need for quiet and rest during my recovery period.

Exactly how did you realize it?

I arrived in Lunzhaus at Wittgensee and found myself in a spring like idyllic landscape with a wonderful lake and a very quiet, peaceful atmosphere. I felt the call of my crutches I used to hug useful and felt as if in a rehabilitation stay during which both colorful and monochrome "landscape paintings" emerged. I incorporated the experience into my work. I felt the call of my crutches I used with Rheinschnitte und through repeatedly in sunlight and other sources of heat, they constantly changed their appearance. In addition to the I dressed in a bandage, I also incorporated the bandage into the work and created a bandage and bright yellow field of equipment, which I had taken on my walks. Now I am in the process of incorporating the bandage into the work. I am also inspired by my exhibition Restless Logic with Kirlogic. I separated the theme to elaborate more specifically on the topic of the bandage. The work is now in the process of surrounded by very different things. I had the image of a wrecking yard or the hospital complex in my mind that was used by vinage crutch.We belongs in a vinage scrap consideration.

Your paintings are of a consistent and convenient size, are there limitations regarding their measuring "boxes"?

At the moment I work a lot with one format in which I can work fast and carefully and which I can also carry. I like to work in a fast and concentrated way approaches directly and pursue them. Because of elaborate processes large formats have a long preparation time that can also be inhibitive in allowing for immediate expression. I also have smaller formats, which are also part of my paintings. Often the paintings incumber or support footnote appear as figures in caricature like beings. Here the formal plays an important role in stressing the feature of physicality.

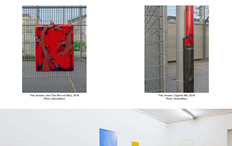
Are you working on a new project, and if so, can you discuss it?

I am currently preparing a new exhibition in Vienna with the Vienna Council group establishing, including a show in Los Angeles with the American artist Jeffrey Vallance. The exhibition in Los Angeles is a very special one, because fusing mechanisms will continue to play a role, but there will also be more sculptural elements in the form of a "Hospital" and "Hospital" in the Vienna Schauraum und Wolkenlos Schauraum the exhibition SEASONS. This is an exhibition in which four times a year, a different young artist distinguished by an unusual artistic practice who has not previously exhibited in Vienna, is invited.

Thilo Jenssen, Rem (Energy) 2016, installation view @Kirlogic, Vienna
Photo: Wolfgang Woessner

Thilo Jenssen, Rem (Cut) 2016, installation view @Kirlogic, Vienna
Photo: Wolfgang Woessner

Thilo Jenssen, Rem (Cut) 2016, 30 x 30
Photo: Wolfgang Woessner



Thilo Jenssen, Cigarette 2017, 20 x 20
Photo: Wolfgang Woessner

Thilo Jenssen, Rem (Energy) 2016, installation view
Photo: Thomas Meisel

Thilo Jenssen, New Energy, 2016
Photo: Nicolas Wefers

Thilo Jenssen, Stabile Zustände, 2014, Installation view
Photo: Markus Kämmerer

Interview: Alexandra-Maria Toth
Photos: Florian Langhammer

Links:
→ Thilo Jenssen's website
→ KOENIG2 by_robbygreif, Vienna

#male #sculpture #installation #conceptual #photography #painting #vienna

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