

Gerwald Rockenschaub

SURF

June 24 – July 30, 2016

Mehdi Chouakri is pleased to present its ninth exhibition of Gerwald Rockenschaub. On this occasion, the artist envisioned a new installation encompassing the whole gallery space, inviting the viewer in an immersive environment that reflects his ongoing research on our ways of seeing. The entire walls are covered by colour fields in shades of blues, yellow, red, pink, green and black, which are punctuated by new plexiglas sculptures.

Gerwald Rockenschaub takes the present, the here and now, as a starting point. Since the mid 1980s, he has been developing a visual lexicon that reflects the immediate contemporary culture: traffic signs, icons, logos, symbols or advertising signals, which he translates into minimal shapes using a range of industrial materials. The sculptures in the exhibition consist of thin sheets of plexiglas overlapping each other, translucent or opaque, coming in various combinations of minimal forms. The hanging screws are not only visible, they emphasize the artist's structural approach and the self-referential aspect of the works.

SURF establishes a dialogue with the space: the wall paintings unveil various compositions from multiple vantage points, that create new perspectives in the gallery. The artist merges painting and architecture in a constructivist manner that questions our way to perceive. For instance, the black colour block at the entrance seems to extend the wooden panels behind the front desk, and the grey chosen by the artist is the same colour as the gallery doors. The installation both conceals and reveals the architecture, blurring the boundaries between categories: at first sight, one cannot tell what these abstract shapes are made of, swinging between a painted surface and a functional wall element.

Gerwald Rockenschaub (b. 1952 in Linz, Austria) lives and works in Berlin. His work has been widely presented in solo exhibitions, most recently at Kunstmuseum St. Gallen (2016), The Schaufler Foundation, Sindelfingen (2014), Secession, Vienna (2012), Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg (2011), Villa Stuck, Munich (2009), Kunsthalle Bern (2008), Berlinische Galerie, Berlin (2007), Kunsthalle Nürnberg (2005), Museum moderner Kunst, Vienna (2004).