

Gallery Baton: Press Release

Tobias Rehberger

Truths that would be maddening without love

2020. 3. 18 - 5. 13

Gallery Baton is pleased to announce 'Truths that would be maddening without love', a solo exhibition by Tobias Rehberger (b. 1966) from 18th March to 13th May. Tobias Rehberger is a German artist who has achieved international repute in winning the Golden Lion Award at the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009) and having solo exhibitions at numerous prestigious institutions including Foundation Beyeler (Basel), Rockbund Art Museum (Shanghai), Whitechapel Gallery (London), Palais de Tokyo (Paris), Museum of Contemporary Art (Busan) and Art Sonje Center (Seoul). Rehberger, began his career as a sculptor, has achieved his unique cross-disciplinary aesthetic whose broad range embraces images, objects, installations and collaborations. Though viewers are easily attracted by exceptionally sensual and intense colours and patterns of his works at a glimpse, his practice addresses multi-layered theoretical questions about 'art' itself instead of remaining as a mere visual amusement. Crossing dichotomous boundaries or hierarchies which revolve around dynamics of diverse genres and roles such as sculpture/installation/architecture, fine art/design, art/daily life and aesthetic/function, he also explores 'in-between' realms among those different fields consistently. In this context, his practice can hardly be included in a certain sphere; therefore, it is rather a conceptual hybrid, being serious and delightful, at the same time, abstract and poetic.



Installation view, 'Was du liebst, bring dich auch zum weinen', Palazzo della Esposizioni, Venice Biennale, Venice, 2009
Courtesy of the Artist, Photo: Wolfgang Günzel

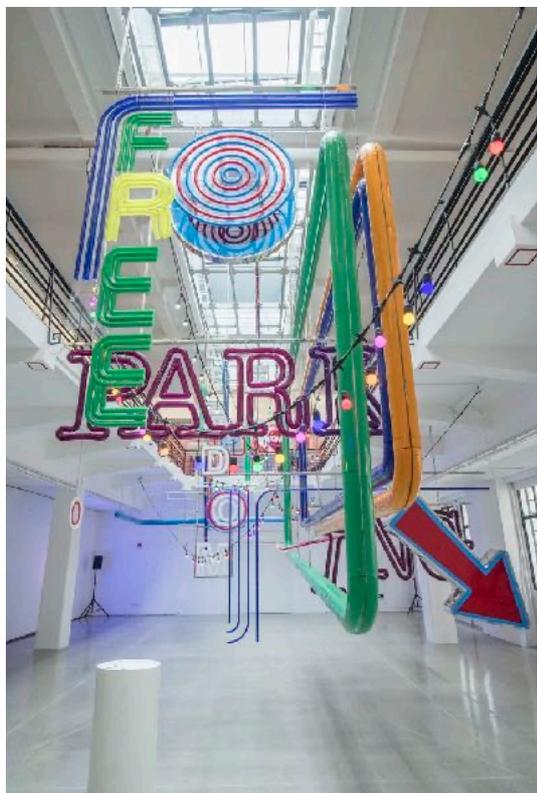
<Was du liebst, bring dich auch zum Weinen> (2009), mentioned above as the Golden Lion-winning installation at the 53rd Venice Biennale, was a particular project which integrated his authentic senses and ideas. He constructed an actual café decorated in patterns of 'dazzle camouflage' (adopted by the British ship camouflage extensively used in World War I) at the Biennale Pavilion in the Giardini. The entire space covered with flashy colors and designs possessed another realistic dimension detached from reality, and it eventually became a 'space of in-betweens' which coexisted and crashed with functions of the ordinary place, a café in this case. Consequently, this work expanded a scope of experiences the audience gained through the exhibition and he managed to expose the ambiguous borders between the aesthetic and the functional of art.

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This exhibition at Gallery Baton, Rehberger reveals his large-scale installation project which drastically intervenes in and makes a full use of gallery's original inner structure. The exhibition consists of three spaces occupied by images, objects and installations. At first, the viewers sequentially encounter five massive walls covered with images, along the advised route of the exhibition. The monotonous ambience of his ordinary photographic images makes a sharp contrast to the images' excessively enlarged sizes, and this spectacle and spontaneous approach of Rehberger suggests what visual experiences mean in 'the Age of the Image'. After the wall of imageries, the spectators enter the next area where small objects are displayed. Contrary to the overwhelming scale of the previous space, this arrangement encourages the viewers to shift their perspectives on the work from keeping a distance to closely observing. Entitled 'ashtray', each object in this space is an abstract figure composed of images the artist randomly selected on the Internet. By designating the objects with small holes as 'ashtray', the artist throws a question how abstract shapes reestablish their functions or roles and how they perform. At last, the third separate space is filled with rich and exquisite energy released from Rehberger's peculiar juxtaposition of neon installations and ceramics. We expect that the exhibition ultimately enables the viewers to discover their independent way of grasping its theoretical depth and finding visual satisfaction by experiencing Rehberger's images, objects and installations which blur the boundaries surrounding art.

The title of the exhibition, 'Truths that would be maddening without love', provides a vital clue to comprehending Rehberger's attitude towards art. The word 'Truth' in the title stands for 'Notion' and 'Love' for 'Emotion'. Thus, this sentence implies that artworks can not exist without intelligence and precision, but it is also necessary to have sentimental, serendipitous and arbitrary factors. In this sense, his multi-layered practice not only raises serious conceptual questions, but offers opportunities to fully engage with the moment of sensational pleasure.



Installation view, 'If you don't use your eyes to see, you will use them to cry', Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, 2019 Photo: David Berens
Courtesy of the Artist and neugerrienschneider, Berlin

Tobias Rehberger currently lives and works in Frankfurt am Main, Germany and has been a professor of Fine Arts at the Frankfurt Städelschule since 2001. Along with the award-winning of the Venice Biennale's Golden Lion in 2009, Rehberger has involved numerous European and international solo exhibitions such as those at Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2008); Fondazione Prada, Milan (2007); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2005); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2004); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2002) as well as a recent exhibition at Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai (2019). He was also introduced in Korea at Museum of Contemporary Art, Busan (2018); Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju (2012); Black Box Lounge at Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul (2012) and Art Sonje Center, Seoul (2004).

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