



Maren Lübcke-Tidow

Painting the silent witnesses of ecological crisis

On the paintings of Anna Meyer

Anna Meyer's rejection of the auratic reception of painting, together with her depiction of "the silent witnesses of ecological crisis", represent a "call for art to once again be negotiated politically", writes Maren Lübcke-Tidow.

Anna Meyer's work is constantly sounding out anew the boundaries of painting. Her pictures depart at several levels from the place to which painting is traditionally assigned, something that has to do both with her understanding of presentation and her approach to the visual material itself. Increasingly, she abandons the museum, the exhibition space or the gallery as classic places for the presentation of art (or at least painting), in order to situate her political messages outside — on billboards, for example. Either that, or she re-designates places conventionally intended for art, turning them into a kind of political space of action. In performances, Anna Meyer has wheeled her paintings into the gallery in a shopping trolley, spreading out her "wares" for the public on scaffolding/stands; in other situations, she has hung "paintings" done on cheap plastic film from the ceiling, so as to create a situation where the public walks through her work. Anna Meyer not only seeks to provoke new ways of seeing, but also explores a notion of extended painting, one that could be called anarchic, since it utterly rejects the fetishized or auratic reception of painting. This attitude seems compelling seen against what and whom Anna Meyer depicts in her recent paintings. These are the losers of globalization, people who sell their humble possessions at markets; who experience the climate catastrophe at first hand, who wade through the filth, coming away with no more than their own lives. They are the homeless, whom for Anna Meyer serve as a cynical image of the deformities of market capitalism. Yet she does not portray these people as victims, rather as silent witnesses of economic and ecological crisis.

Meyer's reflexive stance is revealed not only through her choice of motifs, but also in her ironic reference to the icons of contemporary art: an image of a house whose front wall has obviously been carried off by a hurricane is entitled: "Powered by Gordon Matta Clark". Here, too, the artist is calling for art once again to be negotiated politically.

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