

CHRISTIAN HAAKE. *on displays*

7 February – 21 March 2019

Drawing Room is very pleased to present the exhibition *on displays*, featuring artist Christian Haake (b. 1969 in Bremerhaven), who lives and works in Bremen. Here you will find works from the years 2016 – 2019, which masterfully play with viewer's expectations, memories, and powers of imagination.

“As a good realist I have to invent everything”. This apparently contradictory sentence from Canadian painter Alex Colville (1920 – 2013) also applies to Christian Haake's artistic work, even though the two are worlds apart in terms of artistic direction. Haake's works are not just simple reflections of “reality”, but rather deal with breaks, distortions, gaps and additions to memory; carefully constructed and multi-layered to the last detail, the artists builds his objects and installations from memory, without the aid of design sketches or photographs to work from.

Christian Haake's formally reduced, but atmospherically charged panel paintings lead a shimmering existence between sculpture, painting and drawing. They are produced with industrial materials, and stand out due to the delightfully tense relationship between their industrial production methods (the sawing of wood, sanding of painted surfaces, or forming of plastic elements using a self-built vacuum-powered thermoforming table), and the vestiges of painterly elements they contain (such as watercolour backgrounds or sporadic flashes of colour, applied with a brush or as coloured foil).



Thematically, Haake's panel paintings seem at first glance to involve architectural fragments from a ruined cityscape. In line with the title *on displays*, the artist presents – as if in a store-front window – such varied fragments of the world as floating skyscraper facades (*flight over*, 2016), perspectively daring (train) tracks, the modular floor plan of the showplace of the first Great Exhibition in 1851, London's Crystal Palace (*sinister crystal palace*, 2019), billboards (*four fingers on you*, 2019), and design objects from times long past (*50 scents on a camaro and cigarettes*, 2019).

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Thresholds, passages and transformations are key concepts in Haake's oeuvre, which finds fertile ground for development in unspectacular memories and apparent trivialities. The grey area or passage between remembered image and imagination infuses every aspect of his work. In every piece Haake investigates, as Stephan Berg aptly wrote, *"the fine gap in the difference, which runs between layers. The goal is not to confirm the correlation between reality and perception, but instead to subtly and poetically destabilize it"*.

In works such as *flight over* (fig. page 1) or *chapters* (fig. right) Haake shows that the reality in his precisely built façades and spaces is produced by aesthetic means – or newly invented, as Colville put it – and that formulating his works is a process of translation into the completely different language of images: a language with its own



grammar and syntax. At the core of his endeavours is a reconciliation or a balancing act: with individual perception, memory and subjective proportionality on the one side, and an objective precept that has been internalised as the norm on the other. His works aim for overall coherence and atmosphere, address discrepancies such as gaps or shifts in perspective as a human factor, and use these as an artistic strategy.

"Inasmuch as Christian Haake conceptually disrupts the myth of the objective accumulation of memories through his perfectly imperfect objects, he sets up on the level of the senses an entirely different system of relations which does not proceed from the objects which are always already lost in memory, but instead from people, from the manner in which we actually remember when we genuinely do remember. And this means that narration serves as his point of departure. As conceptual as Haake's artistic reality games and games of remembrance are, so do they present themselves in subtle narrative terms". (Thorsten Jantschek, 'Let's talk about memories – Versuch über Christian Haakes Wirklichkeitsspiele', in *Christian Haake, White Elephant*, cat. published by GAK Bremen, 2011, p. 26).

Translation: Sean Gallagher

VITA:

The artist Christian Haake (b. 1969 in Bremerhaven and now living in Bremen) studied aesthetics and philosophy at the Universität Bremen from 1992 – 1998, and fine art with a major in sculpture under Prof. Yuji Takeoka at the University of the Arts Bremen (HfK) from 2003 – 2008. He completed his studies as a Master's student in 2009 with Prof. Takeoka. Haake received the Bremer Förderpreis für Bildende Kunst in 2007, the Karin Hollweg Preis for Master's students of the HfK Bremen in 2009, the Paula-Modersohn-Becker prize, Worpswede in 2010, and a working scholarship from the Stiftung Kunstfonds in Bonn in 2011. Most recently his works have been shown in solo exhibitions in the Städtischen Galerie Delmenhorst, 2017/18; Galerie K', Bremen, 2017; Kunsthalle Bremerhaven, 2015; Kunstverein Langenhagen, 2013; Kunstverein Ruhr, 2012, and GAK Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst Bremen in 2011.

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Opening: Wednesday, 6 February 2019, from 7 pm to 10 pm. The artist will be in attendance.
Introduction: Thorsten Jantschek (Deutschlandfunk Kultur, Berlin)

Dates: 7 February – 21 March 2019

For further information please e-mail: contact@drawingroom-hamburg.de

Opening hours: Tuesday to Thursday 12 pm – 7 pm and by appointment



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