

Marina Schulze: Painted Room

A room which was built in a room in order to disappear artistically within the room and yet to represent this room – in area. This absurd description could be continued but is still an apt characterisation of Marina Schulze's Painted Room. In one corner of exhibitionroom Spanien 19C Marina Schulze installed a cube, a few square meters in size, and painted a view of the room behind it onto both of its front sides. She portrays the brick walls and the darkened windows. From an ideal observation point the recipient is under the illusion that the installed cube is transparent, that it has disappeared. It covers exactly the view of the room behind it. This is however a fragile illusion – if one moves a little the dimensions fall back again into their original status. Our perception is being played with, it is being challenged, but Marina Schulze has not created a trompe-l'oeil. One can check one's own perception any time.

The artist displays the certain room by covering it up and then through painting it makes it reappear. Several levels appear simultaneously. In this way the general room becomes the central experience of her artistic intervention-installation. Marina Schulze conveys to us, through the different positioning of space in her work, that space has no fixed size, is not a clearly limited receptacle area, but that space originates relationally to ourselves in our sensory perception in accordance with our definition. For example, it can visibly disappear.

However, the artist goes one step further and makes her installation accessible. One can enter it at the back to find oneself inside in a small, white, almost indiscriminate room, a model of the White Cube of exhibition room conventions in modern art, which the Spanien 19C certainly is not. You can see its brick walls through the door of the White Cube. In this opening it suddenly turns into a panel itself. In this work, Marina Schulze reflects on space and the exhibition room in general and particularly on the room in which she realised her work. Recipients who have seen her work will perceive this room differently in future.

Historical comparisons can be drawn from her simple game with the three dimensions which are constantly falling in and out of each other: the Perspective Correction Pieces by Jan Dibbets, who drew an unequal quadrangle on a wall in such a way that in the foreshortened reduction of our perception it appeared as a rectangle. Or the Rope Drawings by Brian O'Doherty, who spanned threads in a room in a seemingly chaotic configuration viewed from a certain observation point suddenly overlapped with the edges of painted areas on the wall so that, here too, the areas fall into the room and the room falls onto the wall.

However, installation in rooms is only part of Marina Schulze's work. Her pictorial techniques are explicit. In her panels as in her spacial interventions she is interested in special structures which she reproduces in details and abstracts simultaneously through her pictorial implementation. In this case it is the elements on the walls, the specific shape of the bricks, the flat-surfaced, black windows. They are reproduced so realistically that the picture can replace the room. But they become mere painting. If they are no longer in this room. Painted Room: a picture of a room on a room in front of the room. It is so simple, it remain so absurd. As Painted Room means in this case both: painted room and a painted room.

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