



PSM
Sabine Schmidt
Köpenicker Strasse 126
10179 Berlin
mobile: +49 178 7855167
phone: +49 30 75524626
office@psm-gallery.com
www.psm-gallery.com

NATHAN PETER | CENTER

Opening times / Duration: Tuesday – Saturday 12 – 6 pm. September 11 – October 24, 2015

On the occasion of the exhibition CENTER some questions for the artist.

What does the exhibition title relate to?

CENTER is about balance, both the balance of each individual piece and also of the exhibition as a whole with several works that interact. The idea of balance revolves round the idea of finding a center. Sometimes it's necessary to fall out of balance in order to find the center. Like in the field of dance for example, where balance is continuously questioned through movements. This is the relationship between stability and movement that I wanted to explore.

You are presenting a series of pieces that allude in different ways to pillars and totems as motif. Is this simultaneity dialectic and is it present in the process of making these works?

The works began initially as columns but the columns, some toppled and losing their balance, started to become more anamorphic and therefore more totemic. So I believe they are both. And at the same time they are neither. A column indeed functions traditionally as structural support while totems are symbolic of spiritualism and heraldic narratives, for instance as in the oceanic, African and Native American carvings and totem traditions. Here the work as columns are obviously pointless as structural support and the totems have no spiritual meaning. This is a very abstract process, a set of rules that lead to a more recognizable form. I was struck too while working on those motifs the immediate association with the works of Brancusi. Brancusi emphasized clean geometrical lines that balance forms inherent in his materials, but unlike Brancusi's "Endless Column" these works are purposely constrained in their attempt to find an equilibrium within the architecture.

The canvas "landscape" presented in the exhibition makes use of geometric patterns similar to latticework in Arabic architecture. With this appropriation, do you intercross the landscape painting tradition with architecture to obscure your painting?

I'm very inspired by the windows with carved wood latticework found in traditional Arabic architecture, and painting is anyway often metaphorically referred to as a window. I've worked with this geometry in the past, and for "landscape" I wanted to create a pattern that was more organic but also utilizes the same rigid barrier between interior and exterior. I wanted to literally create a second layer superimposed on top of the landscape to physically integrate the flatness and depth. The tiled colors become both the landscape and the under painting as the overlaying white geometry blends into the walls of the gallery creating a new secondary wall or window.

There is an oscillation or even a contradiction in your work between a very delicate attention to detail and a corruption of this in the end treatment?

I often begin the process with a very simple and strict set of rules and then systematically attempt to break them and embrace them. With the capacity of so much freedom in contemporary art I feel very comfortable and even more inventive working within constraints. The grid relates very much to mapping out the center and it allows a thoughtful even tedious entrance into the work. In the end the grid is still there but, yes, becomes corrupted. The insistence of linen and wood is also a constraint and everything from the surface preparation to the wood carving to the cutting is all done by hand. The rules of preparation that I adhere to in the beginning of the process become less constraining and more residual as I approach the finish, allowing more room for surprises to occur.