



Geerten Verheus

XENOGLOSSY

28 April–25 June 2017

Opening: Thursday 27 April 2017, 7–9pm

Xenoglossie bezeichnet ein religiös oder esoterisch als beglaubigt angenommenes Phänomen: Eine Person ist – unter Hypnose oder in Ekstase – in der Lage, sich in einer ihr bislang unbekannt- en Fremdsprache fließend zu äußern. Erklärungen dieser Fähigkeit liefern die Reinkarnations-Theorie oder die Annahme einer unbewussten Erinnerung der Xenogloss sprechenden Person an zuvor gehörte fremdsprachliche Fragmente. Sowohl der Schulpsychologie als auch der Linguistik fehlen das wissenschaftliche Fundament für diese Erklärungen, vor allem aber Nachweise für das Phänomen selbst.

Geerten Verheus zeigt in seiner zweiten Einzelausstellung bei Aanant & Zoo neue Werke, in denen er eine bislang von ihm nicht praktizierte malerische Bildsprache einsetzt, die er mit folgenden Worten erläutert: For many years I have directed my artistic focus away from painting. A matter of principle, I couldn't position this one medium on my artistic palette. Its two-dimensional intentions didn't comply with my axiom that every object has three equivalent dimensions and subsequently six equivalent sides. The process of painting itself appeared to me to be directed by sensual impulses rather than by an intelligent dialogue between material and meaning. The semantics of the materials commonly used to make a painting appeared to be limited to painting itself. And I felt that the seductive powers of colour distracted from the form and content of a painting. By way of inquiry into my perception of painting, I made a number of sculptural works that

referred to paintings as objects. Following up on these works, it appeared only logical to start on some actual painting.

One of the main hurdles to overcome was how to deal with the canvas, the typical base for a painting. I felt that by using the flat rectangular construct of linen and stretcher frame, I would direct myself towards making paintings. But the main concern was to paint and not to produce paintings. The challenge was to just start painting and see where that would lead to.

I looked for a surface that was not fully inept, but at least semantically not connected to painting. Rather impulsively, I chose to paint on socks. I then saw myself confronted with the question of what to paint. In my sculptural work, I made a point of letting an object be itself and not a representation of something else. Consequently, it seemed logical to me to paint either paint, or to paint socks. The initial painted works show socks, depictions of paint or of other smearable substances. These were followed by painted depictions of these first objects, enabling them to become elements in compositions that are typical painting subjects: landscapes, still life, portrait, abstracts.

Gradually, a sense of intimacy in the act of painting emerged. Applying the paint to the surface recalled stroking something, or someone, recalled the act of applying cream to one's body and thoughtfully – or thoughtlessly – rubbing it in. This highly attractive aspect of the production process certainly adds to the sensual



qualities of the medium, but seems suspicious from the point of view of an art practice that focuses on making specific objects. Furthermore, the paint on the surface attests to the painter's physical movements and links the presented painting directly back to the painter at work. This connection is something that I have always found problematic when looking at a painting. It provides too much information, and blurs the specific qualities of the object. It adds a component of sentimentality, perhaps even kitsch to the construct of communication between the artist and the viewer. This aspect, and the visually compelling potential of colour and shape can make paintings very attractive, especially since they operate on a subliminal level. Even though I tend to consider this work to be conceptual painting, it seems inevitable that this sentimental quality interferes with articulateness. It's body versus mind.

This dispute, a key characteristic of the human condition, provides in its antagonism a natural basis for art.

*Geerten Verheus (*1965) lives and works in Berlin. His work has been shown in group and solo exhibitions in Los Angeles, London, Amsterdam, and Berlin among others. In 2010, he developed the exhibition „Loyal Jelly“ for the Schinkel Pavillon Berlin.*

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28 April-25 June 2017

Aanant & Zoo, Bülowstr. 90, 10783 Berlin

OPENING RECEPTION

Thursday 27 April 2017

7-9pm

OPENING HOURS

Wed-Sat, 11am-6pm (and by appointment)

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