



# MICHAEL DREYER

Anpassungsarbeiten (adaptation works)

30 April–18 June 2016

Opening: Friday 29 April 2016, 6–9pm

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By now discourses no longer solely depict works of art. They pervade the sphere of contemporary art and thereby create nodes or deposits that in turn can become the origin of art practices. Michael Dreyer is exploring this sphere. His works cling to discursive knowledge, they thrive in the referential without ever being absorbed by it, because the referential already indicates a type of knowledge that always refers to something literal. In order to produce knowledge as art there must be elements that are not knowledge, elements that in their factuality can be ascribed neither to shape nor to content. This is the only way one can compile material sign accumulations that will not aim at style or medium, but through which methods of the work process, mindsets and approaches will become apparent. Instead of aiming for successful shapes and works, behind which the intention of the artist would get lost, it is all about showing these intentions within the excessive accumulation of knowledge as a desire to make and justify decisions. Those decisions, however, must not end up being too obvious in order to prevent a canonization that would again undermine the status of such highlighted knowledge. It is all about cultivating a form of obsession, of abundance and of constitutive digression. It is the only way that the desire for recognition can at the same time appear as its own subversion. Knowledge and material remain in their immediacy, and through them the adaptation to discourses and the art scene's obligation to stay topical turn into cognitive adaptation training or adaptation work. Michael Dreyer's works therefore are not simply "artistic works", they deal

with the conditions and requirements of being an artist.

In line with this, the small sculptures and collages on display in the exhibition are based on similar principles as Dreyer's paintings, installations, performative and film works. Always for a prolonged period of time, situational moments are modulated that are being reviewed for their theatrical, media, psychological and social dimensions. The figurative small-scale sculptures therefore do refer not only to the humanistic ideal of a malleable social policy, as propagated by Alfred Lörcher in the 1950s, they also deal with the reference itself, not only by means of the amateurish production method but especially in the way of their presentation, where the "inner theater" of the sculpture group is always referring to the "outer theater" of its display. Emphasis, irony and undermining thus come together as one. Similarly, the watercolor collages follow motifs from magazines or stamps, another one of Michael Dreyer's "Ekeltechniken" (= "disgusting techniques"). The imitation of a representative form of imitation thereby turns into an act of appropriation, at which the "manipulative image" manipulates itself. Eventually, the exhibition's installation seizes on another mimetic principle and develops it further to a kind of self-resemblance. Singular miniature details repeat themselves in the way of the structures of whole wall designs. By means of multiple layers of reference levels and temporal relations, a state of limbo is upheld throughout the exhibition, in which the literal runs against the ref-



erential, the indexical against the context and the display against the work. Only in the openness of this structural element can one detect the artist's commitment: between "adaption" as an artistic strategy of authorship and addressing the audience that this strategy wants to achieve in its desire to adapt.

(Text: Helmut Draxler, translation: Christina Martin)

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ANPASSUNGSARBEITEN (ADAPTION WORKS)

30 April-18 June 2016

Aanant & Zoo, Bülowstr. 90, 10783 Berlin

OPENING RECEPTION

Friday 29 April 2016

6-9pm

OPENING HOURS

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

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*Michael Dreyer lives and works in Stuttgart. He teaches at the MERZ-Akademie and is founder and Director General of the W.O. Scheibemuseum, located in his own backyard. Dreyer has exhibited in various German and European cities and institutions, among them the Grazer Kunstverein, the Heidelberger Kunstverein, Hermes & der Pfau, Stuttgart, Arco Madrid, Bethanien, Berlin, and NGBK, Berlin.*