

d e s c h l e r . []

GALERIE

Manuel Knapp
moonlight district

Auguststr. 61
10117 Berlin, GERMANY

+49 (0) 30 Tel 283 32 88
+49 (0) 30 Fax 283 32 89

www.deschler-berlin.de
info@deschler-berlin.de

30 October – 5 December, 2015

The young artist Manuel Knapp (born 1984, studied at the Freie Kunstschule Stuttgart and the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste Stuttgart) uses wool threads to create architectural room installations, as well as "black boxes," in which the scale of the constructions is reduced to boxes open at the front. In both cases, empty space itself is turned into the shaped material of his delicate "thread paintings." The imagery of these complex symmetrical constructions is situated between architectural forms and simple objects of daily life. Constructed from a series of stacked layers they develop an illusional materiality that is playing both with physical laws and with our easily manipulated perception of actual space and the objects within it. The three-dimensional nature of the "thread paintings" effects changes in their appearance with even the slightest shifts in the viewing angle, with active lines transforming the perceived depth, creating distortions and bendings of space, initiating flowing movements or deconstructing the works to a two-dimensional state. The viewer is both disoriented and mesmerized by these difficult-to-decipher, flickering apparitions. Knapp deliberately uses various means to enhance this effect: black construction threads that become nearly invisible against the black background, black light to emphasize white threads, as well as the illumination of elements at the back, making the elements at the front optically recede to the background in an unaccustomed manner.

NOTES
ON THE
EXHIBIT
ION

In their effect, the installations and objects recall computer screens or holograms, but they consist of simple materials such as wood, nails, wool threads, nylon and emulsion paint. Nonetheless the works operate at physical as well as psychological limits: the basic construction is frequently threaded in one go, meaning that hundreds of meter of string have to be fixed at the right points while maintaining a consistent tension. Whether a construction will actually work or not is oftentimes only revealed at the last knot, there the individual parts, like in a puzzle, come together to form a whole. Subsequent corrections are impossible as the starting points of the construction become inaccessible. This process is equally taxing for the concentration and the patience of the artist.

There are analogies to the works of other artists: Fred Sandback's minimalist treatment of space, the enthusiasm for optical illusions in George Rousse's photographs, or the meditative work process of Wolfgang Laib. Nevertheless, the main inspiration for the work remains the artist's personal enthusiasm for his material, the thread. While deliberately keeping his materials simple, Knapp manages to push forward into new areas of optical perception. "What I am searching for is a visual construction that does not fit our limited human perception," the artist explains. "That does not abide by the usual parameters, that falls through the grid of the explicable. This is an independent search, a constant experiment, a free field for discovery. The eye is always on the lookout for the familiar, tangible object, but fails to answer the question of what is real and what is not. When our mind denies what our eyes seem to perceive, we reach the threshold of the fourth dimension.