



SEGEL
2015, kaschierter C-Print,
glasierte Keramik
H: 28 x W: 21,5 x D: 4,5 cm



WOLKE
C-Print, 64 x 70 cm
INSTALLATIONSANSICHT HOW THE HAND SOFTENS THE MIND
Stadtgalerie Waidhofen, 2015

THERESIA HAUENFELS

how the hand softens the mind

ON THE INDIVIDUALIZATION OF TECHNICAL PICTURES

Her camera accompanies Katharina Kiebacher when she roams the streets with stern attentiveness and antennae for unconventional coincidences, like a lepidopterologist with a net. The Berlin artist unearths forms that make a clear statement yet are never simple. While doing so she moves primarily in the semantic field of the built; an investigation undertaken in recent years using a method (that can definitely be called an operational procedure) of cataloguing facades, pavement surfaces, roofs – mostly, but not always, anonymous architecture. Katharina Kiebacher hasn't created a lexicon from her collection of pictures, pictures which could be read as the smallest significant unit of her matrix, as a kind of noeme. Instead she developed an album of abstract poetry, one that she permanently expands. Its experimental approach is sometimes more apparent, sometimes more disguised, but always there.

In Paul Heyse's 1878 novella *Jorinde* the ominous narration opens with the description of a house in a small German town. "A high wall, its grouting gnawed by rain and snow, hanging together only by a stone here or there, ran in a wide rectangular line around the desolate property.

Only through the heavy iron gridded gate between the two central pillars crowned with heraldic lions could one steal a glimpse inside. All one could see of the small house, which was only one storey high, was a piece of the weathered shingle roof."

Katharina Kiebacher, as Heyse, does not reveal the coordinates of the events. The composition and relationship of the elements to each other count, not the question about the 'where'. One won't find an "iron gridded gate" in the work of the artist who was born some 100 years after the publication of the novel. One can though contemplate the grid as a structure that creates a certain order and is a strong reference to the use of perspective in photography. And weathered shingles or a wall that has been gnawed away can be discerned in the invariably thoroughly composed images that are reminiscent of film stills. The process of decay, which adds time as a dimension to the equation, is placed opposite the originally strict form of an architecture.

In the title of the exhibition for the Waidhofen an der Ybbs City Gallery, *how the hand softens the mind*, Katharina Kiebacher introduces the aspect of working out a counterpart to the formal geometry

of the architectonic structures through the “Manu propria.” Her form production is done by hand, with the material that was the starting point for both ritual and everyday objects already in prehistoric times: clay. The ceramic works of Katharina Kiebacher, which represent an organic aspect in her oeuvre, offset the stringent rectangle with waves, circles, fault lines. Their relief-like surface is covered with glaze: abstract layers, coagulated colors, painted tectonics.

Katharina Kiebacher combines the segmented elements freely. The depiction of a gate clad with ceramic blocks for example can be freestanding or hang as a tableau, to become an architecture in the architecture in the space. The individual manifestation (to some extent as a specific instance or material unit), that can be found at a designated but not necessary to be identified place, resonates with the depiction just as the abstract notion of a

gate does. The multifunctionality of Kiebacher’s building blocks, which nevertheless do escape their alleged purpose of being building blocks, becomes visible in constantly newly generated combinations. Thus, through this exchange, the artist reveals collocations that can delineate conscious ruptures as well as become fusions.

¹Paul Heyse, *Neue Moralische Novellen. Die Sammlung von 1878.* Berlin 2015, p. 5

TRANSLATED BY RENÉE GADSDEN



SMILING OBJECTS, FRIENDS OF TIME (FLOOR GROUP)
2014, doppelseitig kaschierte C-Prints, glasierte Keramik
Installationsansicht MAISONETTE,
The Room, Berlin 2014