

RUTH ROOT
KATJA STRUNZ

Opening: Friday, 25 September 2020 at 6 pm
ARTIST TALK with Katja Strunz and Katja Mittendorfer at 6.30 pm
25 September - 30 October 2020

What links artists **RUTH ROOT** (*1967 Chicago, USA) and **KATJA STRUNZ** (*1970 Ottweiler, D) is the intention to distance themselves from classical painting in the traditional sense by creating objects that demand a complete change in the way we habitually look at things. The space and the materiality of the works created specially for our exhibition, and their proximity to constructivist art, speak not only for themselves, but also directly to the viewer. This is abstraction in its finest form.

RUTH ROOT's two-part works (all untitled), consisting of a piece of fabric combined with painting on Sintra board, visualise in a unique fashion the basic concepts of abstract painting: colour, form and structure. The patterning of the fabrics picks up or contrasts with the colouration of the spray- or enamel-painted Sintra panels. The artist uses a computer to design the pattern on the monochrome fabric: miniature copies of her earlier works, portraits of famous women such as Ruth Bader Ginsburg or Ana Mendieta, symbols of everyday objects such as computers, paint tins or pizza slices evoke emojis or Pop Art icons. **RUTH ROOT** incorporates her everyday environment into her works, adding to them a temporal dimension that documents the present age. "Art is everything!" she says. She describes her works as hybrids of various aspects of her thinking, based on abstract art. The spray- or enamel-painted Sintra panels are reminiscent of geometric forms. In contrast to Minimal Art, the rigour is relieved; the patterning recalls the camouflage patterns on military vehicles. **RUTH ROOT** appeals to us on an emotional level, causing our faculty of sight and our desire for understanding to retreat into the background.

The works of **KATJA STRUNZ** are linked to those of **RUTH ROOT** by their artistic thinking in spatial dimensions, their incorporation of temporality and their specific emphasis on materiality. The question of space and the relation of the sculptural body to it is one of the primary elements of constructivist art. In **KATJA STRUNZ**'s work, however, space is always linked with temporal extension, in both the philosophical and historical sense. Strunz evolves complex artistic reflections with reference to French philosopher Paul Virilio's space and time theory and to Gilles Deleuze's "folding" hypothesis. Here, folding and the static representation of falling (*Expansion*) are the main abstract techniques she has developed in order to express the space-time relation in a universal language. In her sculptural works, folding is the dominant element, as for example in *Infused Space* and *Compressed Substance Shift*, both made of gloss-painted steel. Early on, **KATJA STRUNZ** was already using collage to develop her compositions (*Flashbulb Memory*, *Gravity of Time*). There is a striking contentual affinity with her Pulp Paintings, which follow the ancient Asiatic tradition of making prime-quality paper from Manila hemp. The artist crafted the coloured parts on them from recycled cotton fabrics. Space, time and history are concentrated by the past inherent in the material.

Salzburg, September 2020

Katja Mittendorfer