

## Intervention XXX-01: Petra Tödter @ KioskShop berlin (KSb)

After an eleven-year hiatus, a tradition of the site, the permanent and site-specific installation *KioskShop berlin (KSb)\** by Semjon H. N. Semjon, is being revived: The *Intervention* exhibition series.

Presumably, such a dialogue exhibition will take place twice a year: Petra Toedter makes the beginning.

For the artist, this is a special challenge, it is not a white cube, a classic gallery space with bare and white walls (like next door in the main space of Semjon Contemporary). On the contrary. The dominance of the Gesamtkunstwerk KioskShop is omnipresent, and the guest must assert himself against it, either in playful complement or in demanding opposition.

The geometric sculptures and objects or the geometric drawings of Petra Toedter stand out visually clearly by their powerful colorfulness and their memorable forms immediately from *KioskShop*. They can be understood as a challenging artistic intervention, although commonalities can very well be discovered because, among other things, the basic shapes of her prism-inspired forms are results of her preoccupation with geometry. The minimalist store furnishing as a component of the *KSb* installation is based on geometry. The cube as a basic shape can be recognized everywhere.

The *KioskShop*, radiating out into the street space in infinitely different shades of white, conditioned by the many *Product Sculptures* in the white-painted habitat of the store furniture with its neon-blue pedestal zone light, now becomes a stage for the colorful, mostly solitary sculptures by Petra Toedter, which are either self-confidently placed on the floor and extend over a wide area like a hexagonal umbrella (*Eumel*) or are slightly off-axis as a duplex sculpture on the shelf (*Unendlich*). Originally, the work *Unendlich* was to hang from the ceiling, like a mirroring 'double' plumb weight (cf. visualization on the invitation card). Unfortunately, the statics of the sculpture did not allow this. So *SoloSunny* was used as a replacement.

The cheerful, even joyful color palette is accentuated by the use of neon colors, which optically put the sculpture, the object almost in a state of suspension, as if in a trance. Despite the statuesque tranquility of the geometric 'figures', which are simple in structure, they acquire an idiosyncratic dynamism through the form-enhancing constructive painting (as, for example, in the case of *Unendlich* and *Eumel*). In front of the inner eye, one thinks to see how the objects immediately begin to rotate around their own axis.

Three smaller object sculptures are placed on the shop window base facing the street. Each is different in shape, thus referring to the diversity of forms and their paintings. At first glance, the paintings seem to emphasize the forms, to be part of them. On closer inspection, one realizes that the individual facets of the prismatic forms are not assigned to a particular color, but that within a faceted surface a diametrically opposed painting is laid out, which in its entirety gives the sculpture a komplex optical faceting. An eye illusion, so to speak.

Framed drawings in strong colors, like cutting patterns, complement the object sculptures and

refer to their planning process. The angles and the color surfaces in relation to each other are not left to chance. The surfaces carefully colored with colored pencils testify to the seriousness of their artistic attitude, and yet they also associate the cheerful drawing battles from childhood, when we 'colored' figure after figure (the silhouette lines of them), one page after the other. One coloring book followed the other...

The framed drawings are placed both in the counter and in the large wall cabinet in a blank space (free from the Product Sculptures), shining from the sober environment.

Semjon H. N. Semjon August 2022

\* To find out about KioskShop berlin (KSb), it is worth going to the homepage [www.kioskshopberlin.de](http://www.kioskshopberlin.de). The walk-in artwork is too complex to present in one sentence.

Between 2003 and 2011 there were 33 *Interventions* in the *KioskShop* with artists invited by Semjon H. N. Semjon to his *gesamtkunstwerk*. *KioskShop* itself was (and is again) a publicly accessible installation tailored to the store unit. Between its first life from November 2000 and spring 2010, before walls were pre-built for another installation by the artist (*Construction of the Modern*), more than 7,000 visitors had visited the unusual place.

In 2011, the artist founded Semjon Contemporary, took over the *KSb* space (now turned into a salon) and used it as Semjon Contemporary's *Salon Cabinet*. Thus, two store units, each with a shop window, resulted in the gallery space.

In the course of the termination of the premises at the end of 2021 after 21 years by Nicolas Berggruen Holdings, *KioskShop* was freed from the walls built in front of it, in order to show it to the public for the last time. A removal would have inevitably meant its destruction. The fact that the great art collector and patron Nicolas Berggruen would have been responsible for the possible destruction of this unique Berlin *gesamtkunstwerk* was not without a certain tragicomedy. Semjon's communication of the story of a real art disaster was to reach him as far as Los Angeles. Shortly before the court date for eviction obtained by the holding company, an amicable agreement was reached with it in February. Until the end of May 2027, the (new) life of *KSb* is secured for now.

The fact that *KioskShop berlin (KSb)* is now part of Semjon Contemporary can be read as an enrichment for the gallery, as a new challenge, since Semjon had radically gone through his artistic sabbatical (except for individual drawing sessions) for 10 years. Nicolas Berggruen had – without knowing it – prepared the stage for Semjon's artistic coming out, kissed him awake as an artist again!