

***Marginal Phenomenon- or The Königsberg Bridges* by Dirk Rathke**

In his first exhibition at Semjon Contemporary, Dirk Rathke will present two bodies of work: curved canvases and room drawings.

Rathke's curved canvases are already well known to the art public. In these works, he playfully manipulates the painting support, moving away from the convention of the two dimensional rectangle by varying its depth. This act produces undulating edges of the painting object and concave or convex canvas surfaces that give the effect of pushing and pulling space within the room. The observer's experience with each curved canvas changes, depending on their physical position to the work. The changing depth of the stretcher's edges suggests a sculptural character, enhanced further by the monochromatic treatment of oil paint on the picture surface. The various shapes and sizes of the curved canvases create a sense of tension within the gallery space. This tension is complimented and condensed by the addition of a wall drawing on the far end of the gallery space.

The end wall of the gallery, which has a large doorway piercing its length, is rarely used as a focal point for artworks. For this exhibition however, Rathke will present a drawing intervention on this wall, using of adhesive tape, planned as a major focus of his exhibition. This room drawing is to be understood as a premiere of a new work group.

A zigzagging tape line drawn across the end wall, playfully approaches and responds to the doorway opening. The ever-changing direction of the tape line passes through frames and/or canvases that might happen to lie in its path. The framed works are part of the whole, but also to be seen independently.

The shifting frames and wall drawing lines within the space as one moves through it suggests an ideal central vantage point from which to view it. Leave this ideal vantage point however, and the relationship between frame and wall lines shift. The continuous zigzag line dissolves towards offset parallel lines.

The edge of the picture frame or the stretcher of the curved canvas becomes a line of demarcation, or metaphorically a marginal phenomenon, which only the viewer is aware of. The Königsberg bridge problem, as indicated by Dirk Rathke in the exhibition title, is a parable for the search for the ideal path. It presents the work of art as a dichotomy in which it can appear to be new or the same, depending on the viewer's position to the work of art. An artwork can only be understood when the viewer is active in its presence. It is not static.

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