

Dirk Rathke – *Painting and Folding*

With the new exhibition presenting works by Dirk Rathke, I decided to bring together, for the first time, three genres at a time: a ceiling drawing, his paintings and folds. Dirk Rathke has just returned from Houston where he had realized a ceiling work in a private apartment, just as he had also done before with impressive outcome in a private apartment in Milan: there, through a pattern of silver-coloured geometrical shapes the ceiling was partly interwoven with the walls, thus splendidly framing the owners' private collection of concrete art. The room itself is an experience, changing subtly over the course of the day and the seasons, depending on the incidence of daylight and position of the sun!

In the gallery, his minimalistic *Ceiling Drawing for Berlin* convincingly complements the exhibition *Painting and Folding*. Originally created as a contribution for the exhibition *Dear Artist, Please draw for me! Part 1: Abstraction*, it still claims a presence in the gallery and has experienced some exhibitions by Dirk Rathke's fellow artists without clashing with their works.

The accompanying somewhat twisted and slightly tilted square consisting of lines, drawn with chalk mixed with gold pigments may well invite one or another flat owner (or tenant) to find some inspiration for his/her own interiors. Dirk Rathke is a master of sophisticated and aesthetically convincing pictorial or graphic interventions that transform the familiar rooms into new and more exciting spaces, broadening our visual horizon.

Besides this rather complex group of works Rathke has become well-known with his sculptural, spatial paintings, exploring the relation of form and colour. These are represented in some important private and public collections, as i.e. that of the Nationalgalerie (Berlin) or the collection Marli Hoppe-Ritter at the Ritter Museum. For almost two years Rathke has been working on the completion of a new group of works, also exploring the relation of form and colour, but developing a completely different language of forms and using entirely different material: monochrome painted steel sheet folds. It is amazing how both interests (form/space and colour) are translated into different genres, creating a unique and distinctive language that unites these characteristics in harmony. Not without reason these two groups of works seem predestined to be combined in an attractive arrangement for one's own walls.

All three groups of works conquer the space, are painting and sculpture at the same time, now coming together in one exhibition space. An exciting composition and synergetic dialogue is to be expected!

Semjon H. N. Semjon, in April, 2017

Translation: Julia Böttcher