

Trouvaille

Susanne Pfeffer shares what interested her in preparing her first exhibition at the Kunsthalle Fridericianum

Speculative Realism

The topic of Speculative Realism came up continuously in almost all the conversations I had with artists in preparation for my recent show, *Speculations on Anonymous Materials*. It seems this movement has finally heralded a shift beyond the Postmodern. The Speculative Realists break with Kant, liberating thought from its dependency on the subject and enabling an individualization of anonymous things. The sensory field is the only thing a subject can be sure of; all else is left to speculation. In theoretical proximity to this, many artists in the exhibition divest themselves from the centrality of generating original images. Engagement with pre-existing images, objects and spaces becomes a desubjectivized site of reflection. The artists attempt to derive an understanding of the world from abstraction rather than an understanding of abstraction from the world. They approach things, and reflect these things through process and seriality – it is only in variational speculation that the anonymous materials of technological flux can be conceived and contemplated.



Josh Kline, *Creative Hands*, 2013 (detail), courtesy: the artist & 47 Canal, New York, photograph: Nils Klinger

Hands

Hands are a central component in works by Michele Abeles, Trisha Baga, Aleksandra Domanovic', Josh Kline and Sachin Kaeley. Hands mark the boundary between background and foreground, material painting and digital painting, photography and Photoshop – in Baga's 3D films or Abeles' pigment prints, for example. Kline's silicone hands, which hold various devices, function simultaneously as both portraits and prototypes. Kaeley's paintings are literally *digital* in the sense that his images, which initially appear as if they have been digitally manipulated, are pastose canvases made with an index finger. Kaeley's method harks back to the Latin origins of the word digital: *digitus* – the finger. The use and meaning of our hands have changed over the last two decades. Manipulating a range of devices, they permanently occupy our field of vision, and fingers are in constant motion. The old differentiation between our body and its technological extensions grows noticeably hazy, just as the dividing line between corporal and intellectual labour, hand and head, seems to diminish.