

Olaf Metzel

Gelbes Mauerstück

Opening: 08 March 2014, 5 – 8pm.

Exhibition: 11 March – 19 April 2014

In Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, Bergotte speaks of a "small yellow piece of wall". He says he saw it in Jan Vermeer's 1660 painting *View on Delft* – and then he dies. It is one of numerous encounters with paintings in the main work of the great French writer of the turn between the nineteenth and twentieth century. Art as a literary motif in Proust is also the subject of a book review in the newspaper *Die Welt* – and in this article, we find Olaf Metzel's large-format 2012 wall work *Gelbes Mauerstück (ein Apfel für das Rot...)*. Right next to it on the left, we find the review of a Cézanne exhibition in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* with the headline "Ein Apfel für das Rot, ein Himmel für das Blau" [An apple for the red, a sky for the blue]. Below is a review from *FAZ* about Lucian Freud und Leonardo da Vinci with the headline "Über die Kunst mit Pinseln zu jagen" [About the art of hunting with a paint brush]. Metzel's aluminium works show enlarged and thematically grouped newspaper cuttings printed on metal, which he folds against the resistance of the material. The final result communicates a physical lightness while creating a tension through the antagonism to the material. However, *Gelbes Mauerstück (ein Apfel für das Rot...)* is not just a sculptural work on the wall. Rather, the work is so striking because it consists of texts about painting and its exhibition, which are now mounted on the wall as objects and thus finally lead us, through the title, back to the wall, paint, and the reception of painting.

In the work *Sammelstelle*, previously exhibited only in 1992 at Kunsthalle Hamburg and in 2013 at Kunstverein Hamburg, Metzel uses aluminium on the wall in a completely different way. For Metzel's first exhibition at the gallery WENTRUP; *Sammelstelle* is installed in a separate room. Completely lined with corrugated metal, large cracks run across the walls, metal rubbish bins are piled up, cut open, or completely destroyed. Anger and despair seem to have been vented here. In everyday life, we encounter collection points [the translation of *Sammelstellen*] as non-sites, where people find one another in the case of a disaster, fire, or other catastrophes. But they are, and this seems closest to Metzel's anonymous empty room, also places of an immediate before or after: in 1992, before or after the so-called repatriation, when asylum was not granted, before or after families were picked up and did not return. As a spatial installation, Metzel's impressive *Sammelstelle* is exemplary for his often explicitly political works, whose significance for the present derives from the social relevance that keeps reactivating itself.

Olaf Metzel (born West-Berlin, 1952) had his first solo exhibition in 1982 and participated in numerous shows since then, including Documenta 8 (1987) and twice at *sculpture projects Münster* in 1987 and 1997. Last year Kunstverein Hamburg presented *Gegenwartsgesellschaft*, a comprehensive survey of his works of the last 30 years. His works are in various major collections such as Ludwig Museum Cologne, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich, Lenbachhaus Munich, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Kunstsammlung NRW in Düsseldorf and ZKM Karlsruhe to name some. Since 1990 Metzel holds the professorship in sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich where he also lives and works.