

Gregor Hildebrandt

In Jade stände eine Stadt

Opening: 14 September 2013, 6-9pm

Exhibition: 17 September – 26 October 2013

"Remember that a picture, before being a battle horse, a nude, an anecdote or whatnot, is essentially a flat surface covered with colours assembled in a certain order."

This statement, which the young Maurice Denis wrote in 1890 like a manifesto, reminds us of a long-ago era of modern painting where as far as possible everything was supposed to be visible. 'What you see is what you see', declared Frank Stella as late as the 1960s. With Gregor Hildebrandt, the opposite is the case. Everything we see hides something. The often minimalist outfit of his works does not stand for a rigorous self-referentiality; rather, a broad associative potential unfolds, devised intentionally by the artist. What we see is again and again surfaces of cassette tapes and vinyl records which the artist glues onto canvas or shapes into sculptural objects. The titles of the works usually refer to what could be heard on the tapes or records if they could still be used as sound carriers. But today tapes and records have been largely replaced as sound carriers by newer technologies, which has turned them almost automatically into the carriers of nostalgic memories. That Hildebrandt only presents the carriers of the sounds, but not the sounds themselves, is a kind of a mirror of a reminiscence which is stored in memory but can no longer be physically realized.

'What you see is what you don't hear' – or maybe you do in the mind? 'Das Auge hört es nicht - Das Ohr hat's nicht gesehen. Die Hände könn's nicht schmecken Die Zunge nicht begreifen - Das Herz nicht wiederholen.' [The eye does not hear it / the ear did not see it / the hands cannot taste it / the tongue cannot grasp / the heart cannot repeat...] Gregor Hildebrandt once used these lines – after William Shakespeare – from a song by Einstürzende Neubauten as the title of a work. With Hildebrandt, what can be directly, sensually experienced always points to the other senses and the imagination, to inner sounds or images. The poem by Alexander Losse, lines of which give this exhibition and four of the works in it its title, make a similar appeal. On the invitation to the exhibition, we see a holiday picture of the artist in the form of a record with a picture; this record contains the poem, set to music by Stephan Eicher. When the same photograph, taken spontaneously on holiday, appears immortalized on a granite slab, the single, short life moment is linked to inscriptions carved in stone, familiar from memorials and gravestones. Thus the new pictures, objects, and sculptural installations in Gregor Hildebrandt's exhibition form a subtle frame for reflection about the relationship between physical presence and imaginary spaces. At the same time, we are invited to think about the various short-term and permanent carriers to which adheres not just what is immediately visible and audible: image carriers, sound carriers, data carriers, carriers of meaning, ideas, memories...

And what do dreams adhere to?

(Text: Ludwig Seyfarth, Translation: Wilhelm Werthern)