

Gerwald Rockenschaub
Redial
January 14 – February 25, 2012
Opening
January 14 from 6 to 9 pm

On the morning of September 4, 2011 Gerwald Rockenschaub gets on the ICE train to Wolfsburg at the Berlin Central Station. After meeting with the director of the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg Rockenschaub supervises the de-installation, or better the demontage, of his huge room installation "Multidial": a 11 meter high, 63 meter wide wall (see image in the centerfold of this catalogue). From an enormously large number of various subjects he decides on 10 fresco-like cut-outs, or rather fragments, to serve as authentic witnesses of this gigantic Wolfsburgian installation. A few weeks later they arrive in Berlin: Sturdy, MDF panels painted white carrying images of permanent self-adhesive colour foils.

Rockenschaub's subjects mirror the culture of logos, the pictorial symbols of our society. As a visual language they communicate traffic signs, product advertising, commercial identifications, pictograms or optical guidance systems to an overwhelming flood of information. We are continuously subjected to the decodification of its countless meanings, whether we are conscious of this or not. ("Augensex" or "eye sex" used to be Rockenschaub's slogan for his posters for the Vienna Festival.)

For a long time the works of Gerwald Rockenschaub have consisted of industrial materials like plexiglass, aluminium, lacquered MDF panels, adhesive foils from aircraft construction and so forth. Expertly manufactured by professionals, they are works of a certain minimalist-cool sensuality. Nevertheless, there often seem to be repeating subtle references to the Vienna Secession (Rockenschaub is Austrian) and also to architecture and modern design. With all due respect to the "optical currentness" of Rockenschaub's art, it also contains a palpable sense of historical legacy.

Initially created for the monumental architecture of the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, the partial elements that are introduced here from the 11 by 63 meter large wall represent an exception in Rockenschaub's work. They are not techno-cool but characterised by their origin with visible markings: connecting brackets, nailings, seams — a kind of relic aesthetics if you will. But simultaneously something unexpected happens. Shifting the single image from the huge format tableau to the more human dimensions of regular walls and rooms inverts its perception. The freestanding image, taken out of the vast vortex of particles, transforms itself into a confident, dominant large format work.

And finally, unlike Rockenschaub's usual renouncement of titles for his works, he calls this work series "Multi/Redial": "Multidial" was the title of his exhibition in Wolfsburg. "Redial" is the title of the show at Mehdi Chouakri in Berlin, which is documented with this publication.

– Mehdi Chouakri