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## GERWALD ROCKENSCHAUB

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### ROMANTIC/ECLECTIC

SALZBURG VILLA KAST

28 Aug 2018 - 17 Nov 2018

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**Opening: Tuesday, 28 August 2018, 6pm  
with the artist present**

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac Salzburg presents its 10th exhibition of new works by Austrian artist Gerwald Rockenschaub. The exhibition includes works from the *Intarsia* and *Relief* series, as well as sculptures and multi-part wall installations.

The *Intarsia* works, made of wood and acrylic glass, are based on a decorative technique that flourished during the Italian Renaissance; pieces of wood veneer, of different colour and structure, were placed on a flat surface to form a pattern. Likewise, the *Reliefs* are a contemporary paraphrase of a historical technique. Foil elements, raised only a few millimetres, are applied to acrylic glass surfaces to produce something like a concise, unspectacular variant of the classic marble relief.

On view are also two site-specific wall installations consisting of small-scale rectangular and circular acrylic glass elements, in which the individual elements are mounted on the wall by means of a conspicuous metal screw; this procedure has the effect of an ironic display of functionality, which, in these objects, becomes an ostentatious gesture.

In their geometric aesthetic, the sculptures, constructed of L-shaped metal profiles and painted, reveal on the one hand the design process (namely of the *Vectorworks* CAD program popular with Apple users), but on the other hand, they are strongly reminiscent of models of Russian Constructivist architectural fantasies.

Rockenschaub's pictures are no longer based on the social or metaphysical utopias found in the pioneers of abstraction, but on abstract codes and patterns from the everyday world. Rockenschaub undermines the *characterisation* of the picture by deliberately withdrawing everything that might constitute individuality in a painting. Linear structures, individual geometric forms and colour fields suggest a narrative level, which the viewer has to draw on his own store of images to decipher. The aesthetic system of the Bauhaus, Kandinsky's abstract cosmos and the artistic concepts of pop art all show their influence, in roughly equal measure. A monographic exhibition of Rockenschaub's work held in the Hamburg Kunstverein in 1998 was entitled *Funky Minimal* – an appropriate characterisation of his work.

One of the most outstanding characteristics of Rockenschaub's method is his advanced concept of production, with regard to the use and the appropriation of modern technologies. He is one of the first artists to make use of a formal vocabulary, which includes computer-generated graphics. Moreover, Rockenschaub has for years been an internationally respected DJ in the field of electronic music. This is reflected in the technoid aesthetic of his work, as well as in the titles of works and exhibitions.

"I take a similar approach to creating a painting, an object, a sculpture or an exhibition concept as I do in composing a piece of music. I think very *musically*. Choreography, dramaturgy, rhythm, etc. always play a crucial role, especially in developing an exhibition concept." (Gerwald Rockenschaub, 2017).

Gerwald Rockenschaub was born in Linz in 1952; he lives and works in Berlin. In 1993, together with Andrea Fraser and Christian Philipp Müller, he represented Austria at the 45th Venice Biennale. At documenta 12, he showed monumental room installations. His principal monographic exhibitions were held in the Sammlung Goetz, Munich (2017), St. Gallen Art Museum (2016), Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (2016), Museum Schauwerk, Sindelfingen (2014), Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg (2011) and Kunsthalle Bern (2008). In 2004, the Museum of Modern Art, Ludwig Foundation, Vienna (MUMOK) devoted a major retrospective to Gerwald Rockenschaub.