
GERWALD ROCKENSCHAUB

ROMANTIC / ECLECTIC (REMODELLED CAROUSEL EDIT)

LONDON ELY HOUSE

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Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac London presents Berlin-based Gerwald Rockenschaub's debut UK exhibition *ROMANTIC / ECLECTIC (REMODELLED CAROUSEL EDIT)*. With an immersive approach to examining perception, through visual codes and interventions of space and depth, Rockenschaub explores our innate desire for order. Whilst playful in addressing responses to our visual surroundings, Rockenschaub's work is exacting in its execution, to the point that it appears functional. His linear structures and abstracted 'geometric playgrounds' include site-specific, multi-part wall installations that respond to the architecture of Ely House, alongside his *Intarsia* and *Relief* series.

Heightening the viewer's physical experience of the gallery space, Rockenschaub's wall installations consist of small-scale rectangular and circular acrylic glass elements. The composition of these Plexiglas tiles, screwed directly onto the walls of Ely House, are an intervention within the setting of the ordered, geometric tiled hallway. In *Untitled* (2018), the floor appears transposed onto the wall, seemingly making sense to the eye, yet resisting a formal pattern in contradiction to the order of the hallway's tiling. Organised disorder also prevails in a 'code' of green discs that is applied along the walls of the gallery upstairs, manipulating and upending the innate human habits of visual interpretation and the desire to impose a sense of order or identify patterns in our surroundings.

The work of the Austrian artist, born in Linz in 1952, has been strongly associated with the Neo-Geo movement that began in the early 1980s with a group of young artists who focused on the formal vocabulary of the abstract avant-garde. Neo-Geo permeated the aesthetics of American Minimalism with the consumerist symbols of Pop Art. In his animations, foil pictures, objects and site-specific installations, Rockenschaub refers in equal measure to ideas and positions of modernism and, in an act of radical reduction and concentration, to the scaled-down symbols of Minimalism.

Rockenschaub's art cannot be categorised by one particular style, however. He is influenced by the aesthetic system of the Bauhaus, Wassily Kandinsky's abstract cosmos and the artistic concepts of Pop Art, with a particular focus on the abstract codes and patterns from the everyday world. His work disrupts pure Minimalism through its interactions with the surroundings, while the Plexiglas surfaces introduce the viewer's reflection into the surface of the work.

Rockenschaub's *Intarsia* works, made of wood and acrylic glass, are based on a decorative technique that flourished during the Italian Renaissance, when pieces of wood veneer in different colours and shapes were applied to a flat surface to form a pattern. Similarly, the *Reliefs* are contemporary paraphrases of a historical technique; raised acrylic glass elements are applied to MDF surfaces to produce a concise variant of the classic marble relief, with a depth of only a few millimetres. Although he takes inspiration from classical techniques, a particular characteristic of Rockenschaub's practice is his advanced concept of production through his appropriation of modern technologies. He is one of the first artists to make use of a formal

vocabulary that includes computer-generated graphics.

Based in Berlin, Rockenschaub was an internationally respected DJ in the field of electronic music in the 1990s, and continues to compose electronic music. His abstract forms reflect this rhythmic aesthetic: 'I take a similar approach to creating a painting, an object, a sculpture or an exhibition concept as I do composing a piece of music. I think very musically. Choreography, dramaturgy, rhythm, etc. always play a crucial role.'

As is often the case with Rockenschaub's exhibitions, the title of this show relates to his interest in music. Drawing upon quotes, or providing disguised hints that could even be seen as the title to an imaginary soundtrack for the exhibition, the title provides a meta-narrative alluding to its content.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

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 solo exhibitions were at Sammlung Goetz, Munich (2017); Kunstmuseum St. Gallen (2016); Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (2016); SCHAUWERK Sindelfingen (2014);

Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg (2011) and Kunsthalle Bern (2008). In 2004, the Museum Moderner Kunst, Stiftung Ludwig (MUMOK), Vienna, staged a major Rockenschau retrospective. Amongst the major international collections housing his work are the Belvedere Museum, Vienna; Brooklyn Museum, New York; Daimler Contemporary, Berlin; Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, Turin; Generali Foundation, Vienna; Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich; Kunstmuseum St Gallen; MUMOK, Vienna; Museum Liaunig, Neuhaus; Sammlung Falckenberg, Hamburg; Sammlung Goetz, Munich; SCHAUWERK Sindelfingen, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart and ZKM, Karlsruhe.

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