

Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle

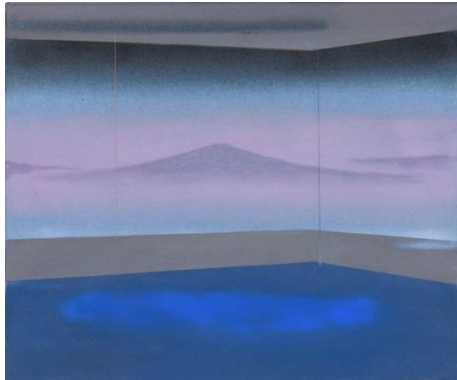
Annabell Häfner

The Void of Now

Nov 22, 2024 – Feb 22, 2025

Opening: Thursday, Nov 21, 2024, 6-9 pm

The artist is present.



Annabell Häfner, Seven Hills 25, 2024, acrylic, chalk and oil on canvas, 50 × 60 cm, © Annabell Häfner / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, 2024

We are delighted to announce the second solo exhibition of the German painter Annabell Häfner, entitled "The Void of Now" at Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle. In poetic dreamscapes, the artist explores the relationship between anthropogenic infrastructure and nature. Abstract landscapes already suggested in her previous works have become increasingly concrete. Through placement and omission, mountain ranges and cloud formations take on greater significance. Inspired by stories of her childhood (such as those of the Siebengebirge, the seven-hill region of northern Germany said to have been created by seven giants on the banks of the Rhine), Häfner explores myths and legends.

One of her inspirations—Japanese woodblock prints and ukiyo-e paintings dating back to the 17th century—now comes to the forefront. Color schemes, compositional elements, as well as subjects seem to be borrowed from ukiyo-e, more specifically from the fūkei-ga subgenre. In particular, the clear and simplified lines and formal language, the use of bold but low-contrast color and the resulting subdued pictorial mood are reminiscent of the often graphic, two-dimensional images of the Edo period.

Annabell Häfner's lyrical paintings, with their horizontal composition and the formation of diffuse color fields, refer not least to the content and formal aspects of Color Field Painting. With the emergence of color field painting in the 1940s, color took on a qualitatively new meaning concerning space. In 1967, Michel Foucault spoke of the "age of space" and thereby referenced the *spatial turn*—a shift towards space—in art research and practice from the 1960s onwards. In Annabell Häfner's work, this color space is not only to be understood in abstract terms, but is actually formed compositionally in a serially repeated spatial structure that suggests an "inside" and "outside" in perspective, which symbiotically merge into a highly sensitive entity. The horizontality of the composition is intersected by a few finely pointed vertical lines which appear like a technical image glitch.

It is precisely this glitch that opens up yet another essential thematic dimension of Häfner's in light of which her works can be viewed. In their surreality, the paintings seem strangely anachronistic; retrospective and forward-looking at the same time. The chosen colors and perspectival inconsistencies emphasize their fictiveness and artificiality. These elements inevitably recall the virtual, imagined visual worlds of more recent immersive applications, which can transcend the generative possibilities of physical reality.

Annabell Häfner's "non-places" - a concept originating from the French anthropologist Marc Augé - serve her as metaphors for an efficiency- and speed-driven, globally networked multi-option society. Simultaneously, they refer to a paradox in dealing with nature. While nature may be treated as an archetypal place of refuge, retreat and longing, it is also destroyed and exploited by the technological progress of the Anthropocene.

Annabell Häfner (born in 1993 in Bonn) studied from 2014 to 2020 at the Kunsthochschule Weissensee, Berlin, under Werner Liebmann. From 2020-2021, she was a master's student of Prof. Nader Ahriman. She won the Mart Stam Prize 2020 and the Inside Art Fellowship 2020. Her works have been shown in (among others) the Rundgang 50Hertz at Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, as well as in renowned private collections in both Germany and the USA. In 2024, she was nominated for the Kallmann Prize, for which individual works will be exhibited at the Kallmann Museum in Spring 2025. (Y. Kaiser)

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