

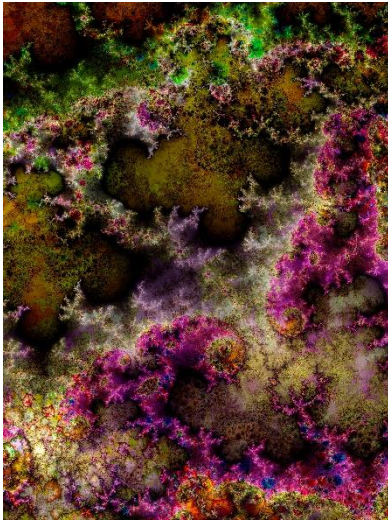
Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle

Thomas Ruff

new work

Apr 12 – Jun 01, 2024

Opening: Thursday, April 11, 2024 / 6–9 pm



Thomas Ruff, d.o.pe 13 II, 2023, colaris print on velour carpet, edition 1/4, 267 × 200 cm, ©Thomas Ruff, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2024.

The exhibition “new work” by Thomas Ruff at Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle showcases the artist’s newest series “d.o.pe.” and “untitled#”. Created over the past two years, both series offer abstract pictorial worlds resulting from distinct technical approaches.

Using computer software, Thomas Ruff generated psychedelic-looking images for “d.o.pe”, which create an enormous maelstrom effect through fractal patterns in vibrant colors. The title of this series pays homage to Aldous Huxley’s autobiographical essay “The Doors of Perception”, in which the author recounts his experiences with altered states of consciousness after taking mescaline as a mind-expanding substance. The fractal is a self-similar structure that was first labeled as such and introduced as a term in mathematics in the 1970s by the mathematician Benoît Mandelbrot. Fractals can be infinitely subdivided into the same shape and thus sometimes take on spiral-like forms. In nature, such structures may be found in crystals or Romanesco broccoli, for example. The fractal structure is also referred to as a dimension. Mandelbrot succeeded in making this structure perceptible using early computer-based imaging methods. Thomas Ruff cleverly combines these two phenomena in his series “d.o.pe” using the latest software programs from the 2020s, allowing us to immerse ourselves in seemingly endless spatial and temporal dimensions, the colors of which are amplified in their three-dimensionality by the materiality of the image carrier. The artificially generated images are printed on velour carpets for the first time in Thomas Ruff’s work. The velvety surface of the fabric enhances the perception of depth in these mesmerizing pictorial worlds.

In parallel, the series “untitled#” was created. For this purpose, Ruff suspended wire structures from the ceiling on a nylon cord against a black backdrop and captured the erratic dance of the light created by uncontrollable pendulum movements. As is so often the case, these light experiments were inspired by the artist’s engagement with the history of photography. In the 1950s and 1960s, Peter Keetman and Heinrich Heidersberger with their rhythmograms and Etienne Bertrand Weill with his “Metaforms” used photography in an experimental way to create abstract compositions of light and shadow.

In an effort to delve into the depths of this technique, Ruff returned to the use of his own camera again, as he did in the “Flower.s” series. Both the “untitled#” and d.o.pe” series convey a mysterious effect. The sweeping forms and movements take over the pictorial surface, Thomas Ruff set the stage for them.

Thomas Ruff (*1958 in Zell am Harmersbach) is an established international figure in the field of photographic art. Starting out as one of the first representatives of Bernd and Hilla Becher’s class at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art in the 1980s, his works are now a fixture in any established photography collection. Serial work has accompanied his oeuvre for over 40 years. Through his technical inventiveness, he repeatedly succeeds in placing the medium itself in new contexts and highlighting the discrepancy between the latest technology and old habits of perception. A large-scale retrospective of his works was last presented at the Musée d’art moderne et contemporain de Saint-Étienne Métropole (MAMC) in France in 2022. (J. Singer)

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