

Piper Keys Exhibitions

Claudia Lemke *What Time Is It?*

3rd to 26th March 2017

For her exhibition at Piper Keys, Claudia Lemke shows a set of new paintings on plasterboard, and has adapted the gallery floor. The paintings depict domestic and public spaces, as if following a narrative from scene to scene. Each painting organises itself around simple rectilinear shapes with scored surfaces and inky patterns. These elements yield a shallow perspective, reminiscent of theatre set design. Would be boundaries, such as wall-lines and curving paths, end abruptly without explanation. Recognisable features like windows, steps, paving and a fountain, appear intermittently, like the incomplete recollections of a dream.

Previous works have involved painting and drawing on other familiar surfaces, which constitute domestic space, such as panels from discarded furniture and imitation-wood floor tiles. Here, Claudia has applied dyes and crayons onto sections of plasterboard, utilising the cheap building material with its sandwich of paper and plaster. This paper surface allows for subtle shifts in tone as the dye is absorbed and the pigment bleeds.

Layered on top of the same material in the gallery walls, the panels constitute a doubling of a constructed surface. The gallery space is itself inscribed as an element of a scene. It is adapted as a material. The floor too is registered as a surface; it has been cut and lifted in two approximate squares, to reveal wooden floor boards. These two cut-out areas, full in colour from the yellowing untreated wood, divide up the grey gallery floor, producing a narrow path between them. This new floor, with its purposeful layout, invokes the painted scenes that surround it. The gallery fabric and the work collapse into a shared time and space.

Claudia talks about conversations taking place in the midst of these scenes; that civic spaces, like a town square, can be imagined. There is perhaps a sense of a different era, when the stadtplatz was a more integral part of municipal life. Where they appear in the broader series of works, street lighting and road surfaces hint at an earlier time, and yet their context is rendered alien, as if they describe a time that never arrived, or is yet to come. A question over the structure of our experiences is raised, like in a Brecht theatre production, when the stage directions are read aloud.

Claudia's exhibition concludes Piper Keys's programme at Norman Road.

Gallery opening hours 12noon to 6pm, Friday to Sunday

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