

Swiss Institute

Reto Pulfer: Zustandseffekte

May 8 – June 23, 2013

Curated by Gianni Jetzer

Opening Tuesday, May 7, 6 to 8PM, performance by Eisklares Echo (Mia von Matt / Reto Pulfer) at 7:30PM

The enigmatic body of work by Swiss artist Reto Pulfer (b. 1981, lives in Berlin) might be said to occur at the intersection of architectural space and performance. In his first solo-exhibition in the United States, Pulfer suspends large swathes of hand-painted cloth from the ceiling structure, countering the architecture of Swiss Institute's main gallery while exploring an ethereal environment.

Visitors enter into a mysterious sky-lit interior. The walls, enveloped in the unbleached cotton cloth, sway with movement, while dramatic pinpoints of swirling color are splayed out on the fabric-covered ceiling. This illuminated starry sky extends in a diagonal band from corner to corner across the space. The exhibition's title, *Zustandseffekte*, roughly translated, means the effects of a phase of matter, referring to a contradictory process of both stagnation and transformation.

Pulfer innovates ancient rhetoric, deploying it as a compass for his temporary intervention. Drawing from the ancient Greek strategy of mnemonics, the artist translates thought patterns into three-dimensional form: secondhand bed sheets, Raku-ceramics, and the handmade crate in which the work is shipped are used as vocabulary. The method of combining loosely associated words is central to his practice. Often these language chains aid one in remembering what might be otherwise elusive details. Similarly, in the artists' studio, the mental repetition of a phrase rhythmically guides the drawing on and sewing together of textiles. Contemplation of language is the pivot point between the fabric and its display.

Viewers are welcomed to an interior space that oscillates between reality and imagination. However, the language itself remains concealed from the viewer, much in the same way the architecture of the gallery is veiled by the diaphanous installation. One is left to explore the temporary and transparent room, tacitly experiencing an uncertain state that mingles mnemonic, performance, production, and installation. The results are grasped yet their cause remains elusive, just out of reach.

Reto Pulfer has exhibited at Kunstverein Nürnberg, Germany (2013); Künstlerhaus Graz (2013); Kunsthaus Baselland (2012); Istituto Svizzero di Roma (2011); and the Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art Vienna (2011), among others.

For more information please contact Piper Marshall: piper@swissinstitute.net