

H A M L E T

Unreal Estate

Heidi Bucher, Jan Hofer, Matthias Liechti,
Anita Semadeni, Elza Sile, Jiajia Zhang, Julia Znoj

Reception Area by Kevin Aeschbacher

Opening: Sunday, January 12th 2020, 2-6pm

Exhibition: January 13th - February 16th 2020

Opening Hours: Saturday, 1-4pm or by appointment

Unreal Estate describes potentials - or the lack thereof - of architecture as well as physical surroundings of a formalized and crafted nature in the sense of housing, workspace, furniture or general commodities and possessions. The works in the exhibition touch many aspects of the interactions and relations we might have and develop with our built or manufactured surroundings.

Furthermore we not only build these surroundings, but are also influenced by them. Physical attributes are obviously inherent to them, as for example the acoustic character of any given material or building structure, but this acoustic character or the desire to adjust or augment it, are symbolic of a time or the people and communities which use these structures.

This is exemplified best by Jan Hofer in his work *The New New Material*; a reverse engineered building material based on the forgotten Rumford tile, which was popular in the early 1900s in order to change the acoustic character, first of churches, later of other gathering places for communities, from echoing to clear to provide adequate surroundings for a discursive setting involving all member of the congregation or community.

Julia Znoj on the other hand, seemingly listens into the walls of the building with her work *i hear you*. In her installation *decocore planetary (she's around every corner)*, she takes a material approach towards drawing space and changing the psychology of a room by simultaneously defining and blurring inside and outside, private and public.

A counterpoint to the formalization of architectural space through walls and doors, is taken by Matthias Liechti with his sculpture *12 Cinema Chairs for 6-Year-Olds*. Liechti utilizes stacked, non-existent furniture - although it may seem as this type of furniture should exist - as example for the formal aspects of geometric ornaments. The fact, that his tongue in cheek object, opens not only a formal argument, but also questions regarding the audiences and users of the systematics asserted by constructed spaces is especially noteworthy.

Jiajia Zhang's video *Untitled (Unreal Estate)* takes a different look at these systematics. The video guides through different levels of intimacy with POV-material shot with a handheld camera, documenting various situations from private to public life. The quoted subtitles are sourced from novels to corporate slogans, as well as real estate ads and urban planning forums and give a sense of the many forces behind visible structures. Zhang's sculptures, the *Citizens R, E, A and L* from the series *Oops Oops Estate* circle back to the questions surrounding the relationship between man and architecture, these skyscrapers are ganging up in a corner of the exhibition space displaying stages of (un)becoming through various accessories.

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Next to this group of sculptures, Heidi Bucher's work *Anna* describes intimacy, closeness and care. *Anna* is the latex imprint of a floor with a cleaning mop worked into it. Bucher's work *Parkett* shows this intimacy even more explicitly; the latex acts as an interface in between Bucher and her house which she called „Borg“ - a word derived from the German „Geborgenheit“ which translates to „comfort“. The gauze in *Parkett*, like the mop in *Anna*, is a material associated with care; in one case for the person Anna by means of a cleaning tool for houses, in the other case for a part of the house - the floors - with medical dressing material. This shows the intimacy with which Bucher engages with her surroundings.

Intimacy appears to be an appropriate description of the essence of the stories told by Anita Semadeni's paintings. In recollection of her father's slightly obscure job as a bacteria cultivator for yogurt from when she was a child in *wenn mir langweilig ist, züchte ich Bakterien* and placing it in a study of perspective is exemplary of this approach. Close by, she shows works from the series *alp plata sura spineo*, evocative of the ideal of a little house on a hill with a garden and a tree. Hereby showing how real estate can amount to personal utopia.

The ideal articulated by Semadeni, can also be understood as a model. Elza Sile uses the reminiscence of architectural models as an element in her drawings and paintings. Her installation consisting of the three pieces of furniture *Domestic Circle, Key Chain Shelf and Animal Farm: deletion* serves not only as container for her dystopian idealizations, but also as a moment of discomfort by not allowing full view of all the objects set up on the shelves. This is especially unnerving, given that models are ordinarily created in order to provide an overview.

The reception area with a piece of furniture designed and manufactured by Kevin Aeschbacher follows a similar functional systematic as Sile's shelves, although less physical. The furniture separates the public from the private and symbolizes a gate or threshold. This element presents itself as its owners would like to be perceived from the outside and points out possible conflicts in regards to art, decoration, commodities and the guidance of bodies.

- Clifford E. Bruckmann

Heidi Bucher (*1926 in Winterthur, +1993 in Brunnen)

Jan Hofer (*1988)

lives and works in Zurich

Matthias Liechti (*1988)

lives and works in Basel

Anita Semadeni (*1986)

lives and works in Zurich

Elza Sile (*1989)

lives and works in Zurich and Riga

Jiajia Zhang (*1981)

lives and works in Zurich

Julia Znoj (*1990)

lives and works in Vienna