

EILEEN DREHER INSTALLS HER WORLD AND OURS

von Maeshelle Westdaves zur Ausstellung Encounter [zero], 2016

Some artist studios are full of the perfect light and the smell of paint. Eileen Dreher's is full of materials and ideas. She's an installation artist. That means her work only comes alive when it has a place to be. She's currently installing Encounter [zero] at Helmut. It is a spatial drawing of sorts. Brass plates are placed on the wall. These plates are cut to the dimensions of her reach. They can be as long as her arms extended to each side or as small as the length of her hand. Brass is manmade. It's a combination of copper and zinc, the amount of each determining its colour. Too much of either and it loses its properties. From each of these plates comes a string.

In this case, the string is like a fine red Tartan. It's warm and almost snake-like, bringing it to life. At the other end of the strings are brass rods in various thicknesses, weights and lengths. The entire space becomes a community with each on their way, stretched to the limit by the weight they must carry. The installation questions the territories of individual space and its relation to communal space. Any change in the placement of the brass rods changes the entire system, risking partial or total destruction.

Eileen Dreher creates a temporary and delicate structure which refers to terms of responsibility, environment and society. With each venue, the installation changes. Eileen creates models for the brass rods and has them cast. The string changes. The relationships of the string change. For Helmut she is concentrating on the dynamics between 2-D and 3-D.

I first saw her work last year at KKW where she had installed NIM. Like Encounter [zero], it is a process-based piece, but NIM deals with idea of creation and fading. For materials she turned to her childhood and chose sugar pearls. Sugar is a main source of energy and essential for bodily function. They also are like molecules. To keep the sugar pearls from decaying, she chose to put them in plastic bags. These plastic bags are connected with magnets. Magnets attract, just like particles. When assembled, the pieces create one body with its cellular structure displayed. Combined in various ways, each structure takes unique structures. Some are familiar, while others are bizarre or even grotesque. It is stable and yet can be dismantled with minimal effort. Again Eileen Dreher shows us the value of the individual whilst exposing its fragility.