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# Philipp von Rosen Galerie

**Florian Schmidt**

*Affinities*

**Opening: November 13, 2015 at 7 pm**

**Exhibition from November 14, 2015 through January 9, 2016**

*Affinities* are naturally characteristic for every artist's oeuvre. It only has to be defined how evident these affinities are or how intense one has to search for them. However, to talk about *Affinities* in the context of Florian Schmidt's work, that we show for the first time in a solo exhibition in Cologne, still makes sense. Because with the particular postulation of a close relation between the works the viewer is asked to understand the differences between the different groups of work and to look actively for communities (another title that play a role in Schmidt's world) and thus to understand that his oeuvre is governed by a conceptual basis that materializes in very different ways.

"Materialization" is a catchword that is worth to be taken up. The group of works that are indeed titled *Untitled(Community)* consists of 16 small "paintings"/"images". They have been done since 2010 and can be seen as the minimized essence of what constitutes the works by Florian Schmidt (born in 1980 in Raabs/Thaya, Austria). All elements that condition his oeuvre are contained in these pieces. Part of this is the question whether one can talk of paintings or images. Because they are neither depictions of something, nor are they painted canvases (and thus differing from sculptures). They are rather two-dimensional compositions of elements of cardboard that have been applied on a wooden frame. The size of these works is the smallest that Schmidt considers feasible for composing a functioning work. The shape of the first piece of cardboard used for one of these works – normally left overs that are the result of an earlier production process and that are recycled by the artist – defines the shape of the other pieces that constitute the work. If one turns around such a work and takes a look at its back one sees that there is no canvas on which the elements have been applied. The elements itself, their material, is constitutive for the resulting object (the "painting") and also for the composition that is, in the end, still considered being painterly. The composition is painterly in the sense that there exist delicate differences of how the color is applied. Sometimes it is a very bold way, rather planar and not structured, sometimes the brush stroke and its different dynamics can be read, and sometimes – mostly in the later works – the translucent color is worked on and taken away with a sponge.

The sculptural works *Untitled(Skip)* seem to function the other way around: a three-dimensional, very clearly, almost geometrically structured construction of white wooden slats creates a base and a frame for an image that spreads out in three dimensions. This image, consisting of a standard frame from an artist supply store, again in very small size. This frame would never be used by Schmidt without transforming it. He cut it on its back side several times, bend it and creates a sphere that is used as a base for a construction of black cardboard that somewhat resembles sculptures by the Russian artist Naum Gabo or the Merz-Bau by Kurt Schwitters. In the same time, this construction suggests faces, which certainly also has to do with its portrait format. A slight narrative and figurative element comes up. The cardboard used for these pieces has, however, not been treated besides having been cut.

Figuration is the keyword for *Untitled(Digue)*<sup>14</sup>. Its color cannot be clearly defined. Its form is inspired by piers and the water, that Schmidt could experience when he lived in Marseille as the recipient of a residence program in 2013. The clash of the soft, adaptable forms and the hard elements where interesting for Schmidt who can – by the way –

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be called an analyst of material. And again, the material that Schmidt found amongst his almost inexhaustible supply in his studio plays an important role. That is evidently true for the wooden elements, the frame that create the "piers". But that is also true for the wood shavings that have been collected by Schmidt over the years and that have been mixed with pigments. The color itself is the result of a multiplicity of layers of color pigments dissolved with large amounts of water. Thus, normally unrelated tones shimmer through the last layer and create the oscillation between blue and violet.

This year has brought up the group *Untitled(Concurrent)*. The works of this group combine paintings, color composition and a multiplicity of layers in different tones with a spatial structure. Schmidt has used an ordinary, monochrome canvas for creating a complex set of relations of frontally seen planes that can be seen also as spatial elements. The color space thus created asks the viewer to take a very close look. Only under this condition the different layers in the space can be discerned.

One more property of Schmidt's works can be exemplified very well when one looks at *Immunity*. Because also this work, as many others of his oeuvre, can be imagined as being an endless composition, as expanding endlessly into space.

For more information and/or images please call the gallery.