

Press release

Kirsi Mikkola | *Qumquat*

April 27 - June 1, 2013

Preview: Friday, April 26, 6 - 9 pm

Glued, cut, drawn and painted. The works of Finnish artist Kirsi Mikkola are the product of a long and intensive process that bonds various different artistic techniques. She shows no inhibition in working, changing, painting over and cutting up the surface. This zestful way of tackling the artistic material goes hand in hand with sets of small shapes chosen with great sensitivity. She makes use of painted strips of paper just as she includes pages from calendars or notepaper, and these items all try and seize our attention. If one studies *Qumquat*, one of her new pieces, then it is hard to focus clearly. At first sight, the colors and shapes almost jump out at you, trying to grab your eye. The eye gets lost between ultramarine and caput mortuum and then starts exploring the lower spheres. The layerings are typical of Mikkola, as she likes to use surfaces to cover over shapes and create new settings. In this way, a three-dimensional work arises that functions like a vortex on the eye. Mikkola rightly wishes her works to be regarded as "construction of painted paper" and refuses to label them as collages. The notion of structure refers to the architecture and thus to the process of planning and construction. Geometrical elements alternate with over-paintings and indefinitely positioned color fields. The choice of color range is as surprising as it is unusual, especially as the composition of each picture is emphatically determined by the intensity and choice of color. Mikkola does not shy away from dirty colors, such as muddy browns, and gives them their rightful place alongside a radiant neon green, for example. Precisely in this way, symbioses and contrasts arise that create great tension and dominate the surface, ensuring the eye never tires of looking. In terms of the dramatics of each piece, there is no customary pattern, and the eye is constantly being challenged anew.

One story provided any manner of ideas for *Qumquat*, and the emotions the artist felt have been transposed into painting across a pictorial expanse of almost three by three meters. For the viewer, there is only the title of the piece to go by, and any search for customary shapes will be in vain. What is called for is imagination, as any desire to find linguistic counterparts will remain unsatisfied. Instead, the image offers you a view of unknown terrain - of space that can be constantly rediscovered with each repeated viewing.

Kirsi Mikkola's works last went on display at CentrePasquArt in Biel, Switzerland. As part of the exhibition, an extensive catalog was published; it contains a complete list of all the artist's works.