

## NATALIA HUG

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### Paul Czerlitzki, Jana Schröder, Thomas Wachholz und Marcel Breuer January 19 - March 12, 2017

Natalia Hug is pleased to present a group exhibition featuring Paul Czerlitzki, Jana Schröder, Thomas Wachholz und Marcel Breuer. The exhibition pursues an ideational form of reductionism historically conceived since the beginning of the twentieth century that was formulated exemplarily in the ideology of the German Bauhaus and finds contemporary reception in the works of Czerlitzki, Schröder and Wachholz.

„Working without philosophising before every stroke of work“ was supposed to be Breuer’s percept and it is consistent with the highly processual approaches of Czerlitzki, Schröder and Wachholz.

The dismantlement of a work, be it art or design, image or object, of its composition as well as its material into its fundamental constituents, its rearrangement according to intrinsic necessity while at the same time relinquishing any decorum reflects the aspirations of a pure form language that sees industrial – anonymised – fabrication as the purest form of production. For the protagonists of Bauhaus, craftsmanship was the key to all artistic work, its aim was indeed construction in the sense of architecture, but its accomplishment was to be found in every layer of creative action out of mere necessity. The function of a work was of crucial importance, whose elements fell into place by intrinsic necessity and likewise were able to be evaluated. The exhibition at Natalia Hug pursues the goal of illustrating a migration of the reductionist aesthetic through the pairing of Breuer with three contemporary artists. And also to portray a still virulent model of understanding aesthetic conception through the crossing of supposed genre boundaries between design and art.

Czerlitzki, Schröder and Wachholz have two things in common at first glance. Firstly, they don’t paint in the general sense of brush, oil paint and linen. Or to be precise, not only: the application of paint, subtraction and immanent processuality are categorical elements of their pictures. Secondly, they are mentioned as part of a new movement of abstraction that operates under the name Zombie Formalism (Walter Robinson) since approximately 2014. The question of necessity immanent to the work, usually in a negatively inflected recourse to the greats of abstract expressionism – from Helen Frankenthaler to Morris Louis to Lucio Fontana – including the reproach of conceptual hollowness, is supplemented by virtuous craftsmanship in the case of Czerlitzki, Schröder and Wachholz, which by all appearances indeed makes one assume a technique close to mass production, and yet each formulate highly individual aspects of visual theoretical thought.

The alcohol works of Thomas Wachholz embody the reduction of a process of painting that is shifted into the anonymity of technology. At first, colours from the CMYK-spectrum are printed on canvases in full format using large-scale industrial printers. After they are mounted, Wachholz removes the colour by extensively applying pure alcohol. The actual process of painting is purely subtractive here, which eliminates the previous addition of colour, which was virtually handed over, “until you are finished”.

Jana Schröder’s *Kinkrustations* on the other hand potentiate the information that is able to be conveyed through colour. Coatings of oil are laid on top of one another in abstract gestures that are reminiscent of an écriture automatique. Done wet on wet, a black hole forms that in an ambivalent relation appears to be swallowing its ambient light and at the same time create maximal weight in its presence. This weight is also what evokes industrial materials and creates something very different to the painted Spontacts that change in colour under the influence of light.

In his series *ANNA*, Paul Czerlitzki completely entrusts itself to the process. The canvases, which are merely dusted with pigment, are produced, transported and exhibited without any fixing. The viewer is presented with an open and extremely vulnerable picture, its fragile surface documents even the smallest trace and reveals its own existence and history in doing so. The viewer is a direct participant in the transformation of the picture, which is owed to a seemingly erroneous production by industrial machines.

Hence Czerlitzki, Schröder and Wachholz don't just share the search for a self-sufficient reductionist aesthetic with Breuer, his furniture items have undergone a similar process of transformation over the almost one hundred years of their existence. Their patina, the marks of their use shifts them from the pure sphere of design into the objectness of sculpture and denotes a supposedly absolute boundary as blurred.

The striven for maximal reduction of the 1920s has gathered dust by now, but aspects of its idea have become absolutely authoritative for the history of abstraction. The works that are shown here prove that it is moreover firmly established in the aesthetic thinking of the three artists.

Dominik Busch

**Paul Czerlitzki** (b. 1986 in Gdansk, Poland, master class of Prof. Katharina Grosse, Dusseldorf Art Academy, 2014), exhibited widely in galleries and institutions including recent solo presentations at Leopold-Hoesch-Museum & Papiermuseum Düren, Galerie Laurent Godin, Paris (both 2016), Johann König, Berlin, Mélange, Cologne (all 2015), Parkhaus im Malkasten, Düsseldorf, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Prince of Wales, Munich (all 2014). Group participation includes Geukens & De Vil, Antwerpen, Belgium, Akademie-Galerie, Düsseldorf, Germany, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Meymac, France, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Strasbourg, France (all 2016). In November 2017, Czerlitzki will exhibit at Kunstmuseum Bonn, as part of the presentation of the new collection.

**Jana Schröder** (b.1983, Brilon, master class of Prof. Albert Oehlen, Dusseldorf Art Academy, 2014). Her works appeared in galleries and institutions including T293, Rome, Mier, Los Angeles, Natalia Hug, Cologne, Hausreste, Haus der Kunst Sankt Josef, Solothurn, Switzerland; L'aventura – Die mit der Liebe spielen, Palazzo Guaineri delle Cossere, Brescia, Italien; fine line?, KIT – Kunst im Tunnel, Düsseldorf. Upcoming solo exhibition in Kunstverein Reutlingen is scheduled for September 2017.

**Thomas Wachholz** (b. 1984, Cologne, master class of Prof. Katharina Grosse, Dusseldorf Art Academy, 2016) recently exhibited in galleries and institutions including Marres Currents #4, Maastricht, Mier Gallery, Los Angeles (both 2016), Nymphius Projekte, Berlin, Kunstverein Kirschenpflücker, Bayer Kulturhaus, Leverkusen, ReabervonStenglin, Zürich (all 2015), Roberts & Tilton, Los Angeles, Kunst im Tunnel, Düsseldorf and Yves Klein Archive, Paris (all 2014) among other venues.

**Marcel Lajos Breuer** (1902 – 1981), was a Hungarian-born modernist, architect and furniture designer. Attracted to the year-old Weimar Bauhaus by its idealistic program that promised new approaches to art and architecture away from the iconoclastic methods of the past, Breuer became one of the masters of Modernism. He extended the sculptural vocabulary he had developed in the carpentry shop at the Bauhaus into a personal architecture that made him one of the world's most popular architects at the peak of 20th-Century design.