

FRIDERICIANUM

Press Release

Helen Marten

Parrot Problems

06.09.2014 – 02.11.2014

05.09.2014, 11 h Press Conference

05.09.2014, 18 – 21 h Opening

Frozen at full speed in vibration between two and three dimensions, the objects and images by artist Helen Marten proliferate with models and motifs, which define the physical and linguistic limits of everyday life. In acts of jigsaw and camouflage, the recognizable is often shifted into a sense of immediate fuzziness. Both delicate and programmatic, the relationship between image and concept is therefore dependent on a sense of unfolding logic. Through this emulation and repetition of ubiquitous gestures, expressions and objects the resultant differences between mimicry and metaphor are made productive: as Parrot Problems. Whether composed of leaves, glazed ceramic, cast aluminium, coins or timber, Marten's assemblages distil the customary order of things to arrange it afresh.

In *Guild of Pharmacists* (2014), for instance, Marten depicts a snake-like form that appears to have descended from the Rod of Asclepius and its symbolic home above the chemist's storefront. Inflated, abstracted and colourfully lacquered it now droops languidly beneath an awning reduced only to the bare bones of a wooden frame. Instead of colourful stripes of protective canvas, it bears provisionally attached scraps of cloth. Like so many garments left discarded, they form a patchwork of traces of human use. In Marten's bricolage, the handmade, chance and makeshift is superimposed with the unmistakable graphic compositions that adorn commoditized proficiency. Hammered to the underside of this awning, two FedEx boxes signify the incessant circulation and change of familiar items—owing to the flow of goods in the global economy. But just as these objects are universal signifiers,

they are also reduced to their most basic and essential components: broad orange text against a gorgeous purple square.

Marten teases apart the recognisable elements of an urban setting to reassemble them through processes of manipulation, abstraction, shifting or collage. In this way, she pierces the patina of familiarity covering the density and complexity of our everyday material lives.

For *Parrot Problems*, her first institutional solo exhibition in Germany, Helen Marten (born 1985) has created numerous new works.

Curated by Susanne Pfeffer

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