

Text for press release

Kerim Seiler
«Maintenant»

5 February – 16 April 2010

Opening hours:
Tuesday to Friday 14h00 – 18h00
and by prior arrangement

Grieder Contemporary is delighted to be presenting the exhibition „Maintenant“ in its gallery’s rooms and garden, where the focus will be on new works by the Swiss artist Kerim Seiler. Secreted behind Seiler’s seemingly highly formal works are very often incredibly precise constellations of art historical themes capable of being set into vibration with astonishing ease.

The neon-fashioned word *Maintenant* [Now] excites a sense of immediacy. It also makes reference to art history by quoting the magazine of the same name that Arthur Cravan published in Paris from 1912 to 1915. This quote affords access to a topic that has long been of interest to Seiler and that, in an idiosyncratic sense, stands diametrically at odds to his very concrete formal idiom. A nephew of Oscar Wilde, a boxer and poet, Cravan anticipated the advent of the Dadaists, Lettrists and Situationists. Lettrism – whose blend of mystical, ludic and decompositional elements are very much present in Seiler’s *Maintenant* – was founded in 1945 by the Rumanian, Isidor Isou, who would have been 105 on 31 January. The word is extended and stretched to make the “now” as long as possible. As Hugo Ball declared in 1916: “If the vibration is seven cubits long, then with good reason I want words to suit it that are seven cubits long.” Entirely in the sense of tangible and visual poetry, or as it would be expressed in Rumanian: *pictopoetry*.

The fragment of the pavilion in the garden titled *Babel (Situationist Space Program)* is an allusion to the Situationist International co-founded by Guy Debord in 1957, which emerged from the ranks of the Lettrists. The name of this work stems from the fact that the wood used to make it comes from the installation *Minotic Neocolor Mindspace (Secondary African Colour Circle)*, created for an exhibition featuring the Situationist International at the Tinguely Museum in Basel in 2007. Alongside this material dimension is one that relates more to the form. The pavilion is a small mirror cabinet that opens new spaces – or an expanse of heteropias, as it were. The Situationist approach to space is represented by the spatial concept of *dérive* [drift], which makes it perceptible without having to wander erroneously through Paris while completely drunk, armed with a map of Berlin.

Following Kerim Seiler’s repurposing of the roof of Grieder Contemporary with his *Pneuma, somnambul* as a guest of the 2008 *Sculpture Trail* exhibition, he now returns to the gallery as an artist with his own solo exhibition. As well as the aforementioned new installations, this finds him, for the first time, presenting new graphic works produced on the artist’s own printing machine, together with a digital archive of images of several thousand pictures as a retrospective of his artistic endeavours.

Kerim Seiler (*1974 in Bern) lives and works in Zurich. His *Pneuma, somnambul* remains on show at the Villa du Parc, Annemasse, France, until the end of February 2010. He is planning to collaborate with a number of cultural institutions in South Africa from early March to early April this year. His solo exhibition *The Situationist Space Program* opens in September 2010 at the Adreiana Mihail Gallery in Bucharest.

(Text by Adrian Notz, Co-Director of the Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich)

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