

Siegfried Zaworka Funktionale

From September 27, 2019

Press conference:
Wednesday, September 25, 2019,
10 am

Opening:
Thursday, September 26, 2019, 7 pm



Siegfried Zaworka
Funktionale, 2017/19 (Detail)
Photo: Flavio Palasciano
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With Siegfried Zaworka, the mumok has for the first time invited an Austrian artist to fill the wall in the museum's foyer with a site-specific work. Following photography-based installations by Cindy Sherman, Louise Lawler, and Jeff Wall, Zaworka focuses his artistic investigation on the devices used in painting. Under the title *Funktionale*, he has arranged a group of image elements painted on bare canvas into a temporary mural that artfully toys with the viewer's habits of perception. What looks at first glance like a surreal landscape with a mountain range, fir tree, and vegetal forms, turns out on closer inspection to consist in a systematic analysis of the illusionistic potential of painting.

Rather than painting after nature, Zaworka bases his work on artifacts that simulate natural forms, whose volumes, plasticity, and textures he reproduces. His "mountain range," for example, was modeled on a sound-insulating foam panel, the "fir" on a tree made of wax, and the "laurel" on an iron-on patch. The mural also features ornamental piecework that has its origins in ropes, brass rods, and stucco borders, and which gives the impression of framing and structuring the "space." With the addition of upside-down hooks pointing in different directions like the noses of portrait subjects, the whole calls to mind the history of painting as wall decoration.

Trying to shake off that same stigma and emancipate their work from the wall is an endeavor that has been preoccupying painters since the Renaissance. The possibilities offered by linear perspective played a vital role here. By imitating two traditional landscape scenes complete with frames and integrating them into his own "landscape," Zaworka also flirts with the proverbial "window of painting." His landscape depictions don't open up a vista into the distance, however, but like the "fir tree" and "mountain range" are second-order images: Their purpose is to expose deception as something natural.

And yet in one spot the wall does (seem to) open up: In one corner, a section of brick wall like the ones hidden by many rendered surfaces has been exposed. But rather than remaining in the "background," this corner jumps out at us as a block of masonry. Here it becomes explicit that Zaworka's mural is not about nature but about artificiality and its function in art. His "landscape" is a meta-landscape that invites us on a stroll through the field of artistic possibilities.

Siegfried Zaworka was born in 1972 in Wolfsberg and studied at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg and the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. He lives and works in Vienna.

Curated by Manuela Ammer

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