

TIF SIGFRIDS

COLOGNE

Frances Scholz

GALERIE MONIKA SPRÜTH PHILOMENE MAGERS

From the beginning, Frances Scholz wanted her paintings to rise above the opposition between narrative and abstraction. All along, she has challenged herself with color, line, and pure form—the elements of painting. And yet she didn't want to stick with just that. The world of her paintings was not meant to renounce all relationship to reality, even though she didn't want to paint narrative pictures. But how can one carry this ambition off?

In her most recent paintings, Scholz has discovered a method that allows her to do so. Photos, symbols, and logos from the daily press provide her starting point. For example, she comes across the letters SOS, the international call for help: She flips them and turns them upside down, then projects them backward onto a canvas and fills them in with color. Her colors are often primaries and other bright tones, the paint fluid and drippy: Randomness is part of the equation. The exhibition's title, "Like a Hurricane," refers to a satellite photograph of Hurricane Frances, which raged over Florida in 2004. A banal coincidence—the fact that she and the hurricane shared a name—piqued the artist's interest. In various reversals, enlargements, and croppings, the hurricane image constantly reappears in these paintings. Like the SOS symbol, the hurricane itself becomes scarcely recognizable, and yet the work doesn't seem to try to rise above reality; somewhere behind the forms, behind the modules, something real is hiding. They have not quite broken the connection to reality. But as if the paintings themselves might still somehow be too abstract, Scholz had the window wall of the gallery covered with photographic wallpaper. It shows a garage buried in dirt after a landslide in Los Angeles. Thus this artist connects her painting with both sculpture—a tree house has been set up in the room—and photography, even while granting painting the decisive role in the installation.

In this exhibit, reality itself becomes a module in a methodical process; it is not just enlarged or reduced, not just shown in reverse, but rather copied en masse, layered and folded into infinity. In his book *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (1988), Gilles Deleuze showed how, beginning with the Baroque, European thought abandoned the straight path of classical reason and developed more and more in folds, similar to the visible folds of the human brain. Likewise in Scholz's paintings: They refuse the central-perspective construction of space, an expression of the straightforwardly linear thought of classical reason—a space in the midst of which stands the reasoning subject from whose standpoint the world can be posited, from its surface to its depths, according to abstract principles.

Frances Scholz,
D'04,07,2004,
acrylic on canvas,
47 ¼ x 90 ½".



Scholz's paintings also show spaces, but instead of being constructed from a single standpoint, they overlap each other, suggesting depths that suddenly tip forward or sink farther away. It is not easy to distinguish foreground from background. Our gaze circles around and around the painted surfaces—Scholz even invites us to enter the tree house and thus intensify the multiplicity of views—and each time it does so, the eye catches another depth, another breakthrough, a new surface.

—Noemi Smolik

Translated from German by Sara Ogger.

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