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e-flux

DAVID TREMLETT: HAMBURGER KUNSTHALLE



David Tremlett (*1945) is one of the most important British artists of his generation. Since the 1960s he has numerous exhibitions in renowned international museums like the Tate Gallery London, MoMA New York and Centre Pompidou in Paris. In 1972 he participated in the legendary documenta 5 of Harald Szeeman. In 1992 he was nominated for the Turner Prize. His exhibition at Hamburger Kunsthalle will be the first comprehensive exhibition in a German museum since 1992. For this exhibition, David Tremlett has taken over the entire third floor of the Gallery of Contemporary Art with new site-specific wall drawings, which were explicitly conceived for Hamburger Kunsthalle. In combination with works on paper, artist books and photographs from 1970-2000, the exhibition will give a comprehensive overview of the artist's oeuvre of the past years. David Tremlett creates spaces using the ephemeral pigment of pastel crayons. A trained sculptor, since the end of the 1970s he has been working directly on the wall.

"David Tremlett: Hamburger Kunsthalle." *e-flux*, June 11, 2010.

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His wall drawings in museums, private and public buildings, sacred spaces or ruins, are inextricably bound to their spatial context, forming an entity by tracing the volumes, rhythms and proportions of the pre-existing architecture. His vocabulary of forms and colours is inspired by the particular place he is currently working in. With his interventions the artist achieves the poetic completion or reconstitution of the spaces he works in. His forms consist of lines and irregular, geometric shapes, often reminiscences of floor plans or architectural features he has encountered – doorways or signs abstracted into stylised, imaginary plans and constructivist shapes. His palette ranges from earth tones to strong colours like red, yellow, turquoise, blue and green. Although Tremlett sees himself clearly within the wall painting tradition, which in the case of frescoes aims for permanence, he has chosen to work in a fragile, transitory medium. It is exactly the ephemeral quality of pastels, appearing to contradict the traditions of the genre, which appeals to him. As a sculptor he is at the same time fascinated by the malleability of the pastels as he rubs them into the wall. I am actually building something in my wall drawings, but within the surface, he has said in an interview. A catalogue with illustrations of all the wall drawings made for Hamburger Kunsthalle will be published to accompany the exhibition and features, amongst others, texts by Martina Fuchs and Sabrina van der Ley. Curated by Sabrina van der Ley.

