



seems an echo of her painterly surfaces. La Melia's touch is quick and whimsical, and each painting appears in a finely crafted, colorful frame. Some of her compositions elicit a smile. In *Je ne sais quoi*, 2016–17, a purple-and-yellow pansy blooms ebulliently and holds a glass of red wine in one folded leaf, while jauntily pointing another leaf toward the sky. A cry of “*Santé!*” is nearly audible. La Melia, like a poet, is not only testing the potential of her imagination but teasing her viewer with collisions of references and tastes. Most impressive is her sense of humor, a quality that implies intimacy, freedom, and the warm softness of a beaming face.

While several of La Melia's paintings, such as *Yellow Mistral*, incorporate aluminum powder or

glitter, her works are not like John Armleder's glitter canvases, which stage deadpan investigations of the relationship between art and decoration. Hers is a girlish playfulness that forces the proximity of disparate media as well as divergent forms, and generates encounters between representation and abstraction. Balland suggests that kitsch or “bad taste” is at issue in her work, but she seems more concerned with the juxtapositions that arise between the various elements of her selected vocabulary and media. Two images, like two friends growing up to lead two very different lives, or two unexpectedly connected words in a poem, may find new and more ample meaning in the very presence of each other.

—Lillian Davies

## BERLIN

### Anselm Reyle

KÖNIG GALERIE

In “Eight Miles High,” his first one-man show at König Galerie, Anselm Reyle created a shining sculptural trinity of geometrical abstraction, beautifully combining processes of secularization and re-sacralization. In the gallery's central exhibition space—the converted nave of the former Saint Agnes Kirche—he placed three free-hanging large-scale aluminum sculptures: *Windspiel (Diamond)*, *Windspiel (Square)*, and *Windspiel (Circle)* (all works 2017). The setting is both ambitious and demanding: a vast room, forty feet high and more than four thousand square feet in size, whose walls are covered in gray-beige roughcast.

Reyle keeps returning to the visual languages of modernism: its utopian forms, its poignancy, and what often can be seen with hindsight as its strange wrong turnings and idiosyncratic paths. He takes up these visual languages in his work, affirmatively appropriating them in order to present them in a new way, while at the same time hiding nothing of their questionable nature. This is why a modern sacred building like Saint Agnes, possessed as it is of daunting sublimity, is for him the ideal stage, a dramatic foil with which his work can interact.

With the hanging *Windspiel* sculptures, Reyle presented a new group of works, although the artist has said that the ideas behind them have been on his mind for a long time. For a while he took a break from

holding exhibitions in order to sort through these projects and ideas and develop them further. The result was a group of works that exhibits a characteristic ambivalence: On the one hand, its formal language clearly harks back to artistic traditions of Op art and kinetic art; on the other, the artist also makes reference to the Arts and Crafts tradition of garden mobiles and new age kitsch. Reyle lets “high art” collide with its pop-cultural adaptations to reveal their hidden relations. He then combines the two into an aesthetically ambivalent work.

The aluminum sculptures represent the basic geometrical forms of circle, square, and rhombus, respectively. The surface of each one is articulated in linear, concentrically arranged segments that trace an evenly progressing ninety-degree angle around a central axis so that the surface of the object fans out into the room. By combining this formal reductionism with large scale—*Windspiel (Diamond)* is about eighteen by thirteen feet, *Windspiel (Square)* is about five-and-a-half feet square, and *Windspiel (Circle)* has a diameter of roughly nine-and-a-half feet—Reyle has found a stylistic means of transforming the sacred poignancy of the space into something complex; ambivalent, and beautiful. The way the sculptures slowly rotate serves to emphasize this: Electric motors hidden in the wooden ceiling ensure they turn at a slow pace, while light from discreetly placed spots reflects off the aluminum, flashing across the entire room. Reyle has further varied this effect by treating the surfaces of the sculptures in different ways; he also took into account the effect of natural light. Daylight entered the room in such a way as to emphasize the surface and materiality of the objects; when the light began to fade, the shadows the objects cast on the walls became far more visible, seeming to double their presence. What is more, the shadows turned in the opposite direction to the objects, lending the ensemble an element of elegant drama.

Also on show alongside this main installation with its themes of the sacred and the aesthetic was a new painting from the series “Zen Paintings” and two untitled assemblages from the series “Scrap Metal Paintings,” both 2017–. All of these too seem to have been made with an eye for their dramatic impact: Two of them were highly aesthetic arrangements of industrial waste; in the manner of the Nouveaux Réalistes, Reyle has taken the metal splinters produced in drilling and lathe work and strewn them across a canvas. The other picture, a sweep of paint made in rough black acrylic paste, appeared to have been executed with a kind of meditative evenness, less gestural than earlier, comparable paintings by the artist. Ridges of paint protruding from the



Anselm Reyle, *Windspiel (Diamond)*, 2017, aluminum, electric motorized, 18' ½" × 13' 1½".

canvas were then decorated with metallic foil, in a process similar to gilding. Taken as a whole, the works in this show consistently develop Reyle's project of the (aesthetic) transfiguration of the everyday.

—*Jens Asthoff*