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(translation Elizabeth Renken)

## **CREATIVITY AND RULES. THE NEW WORKS OF THOMAS KOCH**

The collages, assemblages, drawings and paintings of the artist Thomas Koch, born in Bochum in 1959, are the fruits of a development process spanning many years, a process characterized by consistency, tenacity and constant reflection of the artist's own creativity. There are no ruptures or abrupt changes in perspective to be found in this development: it is defined by shifts, new accentuations and additions to the artist's vocabulary of forms, primarily inspired by experiments with new materials.

Thomas Koch proceeds like a researcher, experimenting with his work, constantly exploring new shapes and configurations. Like a musician or a composer, he delves into variations on his theme, tuning his performance to self-set rules. The point of departure for his work is always an arrangement of objects which is transformed into a painting or a collage once it has passed through a sketching process. This tangible source - which an uninitiated observer finds almost impossible to recognize in the final composition - is of paramount importance to the artist because it provides a frame of reference and a basic structure for the ensuing artistic transformation. The metamorphosis draws on reduction techniques, on concentration and deformation, layering, turning, overlaying, reproducing, mirroring, cutting, pasting over and combining, in short a diverse spectrum of systematic and intuitive possibilities for artistic intervention. The original point of departure is completely set aside, leaving room for the perception of painting and sketching skills, for material and surface effects. The intuitive choice of colors and delicate surface finishes, touched with a hint of chance, preserve the fascinating balance between continuity and rule-driven methodology. Neither the graphical, rational element, nor the more emotional interaction with color and a sense of material arrangement, predominates; instead, the immediate impression is one of tempered, harmonious wholeness of the composition.

Intuition and an unfettered approach to new, unusual materials have acquired greater significance in Thomas Koch's work in recent years. The line is allowed a random curve. The untreated substrate, the hint of a surface, rhythmic shapes and layering, even traces and relicts of collage materials from earlier works - all of these are to be found in the artistic design: book covers and spines, adhesive tapes, text fragments and traces of use lend an innovative temporal and poetic quality to the compositions shaped like squares or circles. The quasimusical character of the most recent works, along with the experience of space and layering, of transparency, movement and temporality are acquiring a stronger voice. Thomas Koch's works demand of the observer not only the ability to appreciate a structural order

constituted in the here and now, but also the capacity to understand the cycle of visual development, genesis as the synthesis of creativity and rules. That opens the door on a complex artistic oeuvre that is constantly searching for new approaches and sensory models, where free, intuitive inspiration and rational construction, system, and chance constantly interact to form new syntheses.

In: Catalogue THOMAS KOCH, Collagen / Malerei Glas und Glasobjekte Papierarbeiten 2011 – 2017, 2017, page 5