

FALTEN

In Philip Wiegard artistic practice, there are no static elements nor values. Rather, the process of visualization of the artwork hovers between the act of vision and that of memory, between comprehension and knowledge, forever in balance between the idea of an object and that of a thing, halfway between the notion of grammar and that of criterion.

Pushing, crushing, contorting, folding, pressing, mutilating, reassembling, these are the gestures that sustain the work of the German artist, a practice which is at the same time subtle and brutal. With great dexterity and ability, he destabilises the relation between form and function and subsequently places it literally in perspective by mixing the scales of the real.

The reliefs and installations by Wiegard are often realised with mundane and ordinary materials of commonplace memory. The very titles *Bicycle Basket*, *Yellow Chair*, *Spaghetti Junction*, and *Spaghetti with Cheese* trace with irreverent precision the contours of an absurdly familiar landscape and by doing this, they narrate fragments of ordinary lives. There's something absurdly real in the images of Philip Wiegard.

The artist gathers his materials from construction sites or he simply finds them in buildings undergoing renovation, while, most recently, he started collecting them from flea markets. He then alters these objects dramatically giving them a new life.

Wiegard uses the dada strategy, free from any modernist ideology, to explore purely formal issues using such objects collected from real life. This is how old cinema seats, abandoned bar stools, discarded shop counters and old floorboards, find themselves having to comply to the process of being dismantled and disassembled, mutilated and deprived of their "limbs" in order to be reassembled once again losing, at the same time, their original three-dimensional quality.

This newly acquired optical illusion is effectively negated with each movement of the gaze. Therefore, it is not possible to relate what you see with a process of improvisation. A good example of this is *Séance* where a group of chairs of Napoleonic memory are placed round a table draped with precious damask. This set mimics the act of *mise en scène*, and at the same time, that of an epilogue. The chairs appear like mute actors that, with their silence, push the gaze beyond the limits of interpretation in order to focus impatiently on the visual effect of the work.

The title of the show, "Falten", is a German word that carries a double meaning. As a verb, it indicates, literally, the act of "folding" and suggests that constant movement between exterior and interior implicit in this gesture, whereas, as a noun, it stands for a drape or the loose folds of a cloth. Both these metaphorical elements, the act and the thing in itself, underline the intricate

itinerary of the show. The concept of a "fold" so dominant and fundamental during the Baroque era, reverberates beyond its historical parameters and, just like Deleuze said in "*Le pli: Leibniz et le baroque*", it can equally be applied to the contemporary in its most recent form as Michaux's "*La vie dans le plis*", Boulez's "*Fold After Fold*", and Simon Hantaï's very own artistic practice of folding, can testify. The fold is a "process" that influences in different degrees and with varying speeds and vectors everything that becomes expressive matter.

With a good dose of irony and humour, Wiegard applies to sculpture the optical rules of pictorial perspective within a scale of 1:1. His objects, deprived of their original volume, are removed at the same time from their function and their materiality and are permanently suspended between the state of being an object and that of becoming an image. As a matter of fact, they seem to vanish in the process of transition from a bi-dimensional space to a three-dimensional one and back again, and in this perpetual movement they forget, with confident and unflappable lightness, their mundane function. The only thing left for them is a disillusioned gaze, which remains constantly suspended between the observation of an image in perspective, and that of deformed pieces of furniture.

Rita Selvaggio

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Bar

2004,
bar stools, wood,
180 x 103 x 55 cm

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Spaghetti with cheese

2007,
oil on canvas on wood,
128 x 97 cm

Courtesy Laura Mars Grp - Berlin

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Spaghetti with cheese

2007,
oil on canvas on wood,
140 x 97 cm

Courtesy Laura Mars Grp - Berlin

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Spaghetti junction

2007,
cardboard on wooden frame,
320 x 190 x 80 cm

Courtesy Laura Mars Grp - Berlin

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Séance

2007,
chairs, armchair, wood,
cardboard, silk cloth,
190 x 165 x 78 cm

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Bicycle baskets

2007,
found objects,
coated metal, approx,
49 x 43 x 1 cm

Courtesy Laura Mars Grp - Berlin

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Golden chair 1

2007,
chair, terry cloth, colour,
80 x 110 x 30 cm

Courtesy Laura Mars Grp - Berlin

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Golden chair 2

2007,
chair, terry cloth, colour,
110 x 100 x 30 cm

Courtesy Laura Mars Grp - Berlin

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Hairy beary

2004,
acrylic on polystyrene,
35 x 30 x 6 cm

Courtesy Laura Mars Grp - Berlin

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Serpent

2007,
dried snake skin, resin,
227 x 20 x 7 cm

Courtesy Freymond-Guth & Co.
Fine Arts - Zurich