

**ALISON MOFFETT
A ROOM WITH A VIEW**

January 18th, 2014 - March 1st, 2014

SCHLEICHER/LANGE BERLIN

Opening Friday, January 17th, 2014, 6pm-9pm

Alison Moffett's current solo show has a strong focus on drawing. She explores how landscape, and thus space in the broadest sense, is constructed and also addresses its representation by means of various systems of classification. Among other things, she relies on cartographical and surveying mechanisms and methods.

Her "Scenic view" series functions in two-parts, each made up of one A4 page of graph paper that she crumples up and then unfolds again and another, the 'map' of this new terrain drawn through the shaded 'hills and valleys'. The crumpling act requires only a matter of seconds and the process is spontaneous. The lightness of this gesture contrasts starkly with the extremely careful formulation of the corresponding drawing and the precise rendering of the smallest of details. Here, the logical graph paper sections serve as the ordering construct and mediator. They enable a true-to-scale representation of the paper topography, the shaded contours of a new paper terrain.

Drawing is an act of charting this imaginary landscape, representing and legitimating it. In other words, once encoded in a drawing, landscape as the specific representation of space is constructed in a conscious act of creation and influence - in line with Alfred Korzybski's adage that "the map is not the territory". In this way, Moffett plays with concepts and notions that go far beyond the domain of drawing itself. Her outsized drawing of a cloud is made up of a large number of individual square fragments. The choice of theme and representation in the form of a geometric grid both allude to a paradox innate to the cloud: The Renaissance believed clouds could not be represented owing to their nebulous indeterminacy, bereft of fixed place or outline, structures that by virtue of their dynamism and undefined shapes flew in the face of true-to-scale depiction within a system of geometric coordinates. Nevertheless, the cloud takes a very prominent position within Renaissance and Baroque art: frescoes and paintings that attempt to show with their grandeur and ephemerality, that which is unshowable. With the sheer scale of her drawing Alison Moffett alludes to the overwhelming effect of such representations of clouds. The act of gridding the image acts as a tool, the subdivision of which allowing for a more detailed compartmentalization, a more specific reproduction. But, here is where the logic of the grid breaks down - where it becomes unable to contain the cloud, the historic symbol of transience - as each gridded fragment is made individually, they build up to form the whole, but they do not always line up completely. A close inspection proves the failure of the grid to overcome chaos and we are left with the continued paradox: the equilibrium of order and disorder. With this theme Moffett references Romantic representations of nature and thus the concept of the sublime, which entails not only amazement when viewing nature, and admiration of it, but also the fear of it, the potential threat that nature constitutes.

Created by carefully tearing pages from the book "Alps and Elephants" (1955), Moffett 'constructs' the grandeur of the Alpine mountain range within a simple action, turning on its head the overwhelming nature of the Sublime, rendering it both endlessly grand and uncomplicatedly easy. The content of the book revolves around an expedition exploring how Hannibal crossed the Alps with elephants during the Second Punic War of 218 B.C. In her act of tearing, Moffett refers to this semi-mythic story and to the threat such terrains poses, as the Alps can swiftly morph into a deadly opponent. Tearing the mountain range at once places the control of such a vast vista back into her hands, while simultaneously highlighting the inevitable unruliness of disobedient torn paper. Here, landscape is construed as a character in its own right. The coin-sized "bench mark" is a "United States Geological Survey marker" used as a point of orientation during land surveying. This sits as the piece connecting each of the different works in the exhibition: Fixed to the wall at the level of Moffett's eye height, it denotes her own personal horizon, a self-portrait as such, her own 'point of view'. It defines that special vantage point whence everything in the exhibition is surveyed: literally, in the case of the "crumpled maps", for example, which have thus been hung below and above the bench mark, while also, more inclusively, representing the singular view or investigation of the artist herself.

Text: Kirsten Eggers (2014)

Translation: Dr. Jeremy Gaines