

Kathi Hofer
New Year's Resolutions
Gabriele Senn Gallery, 17.1.–8.3. 2014

In the long run, we are all dead

With her solo show *New Year's Resolutions*, Kathi Hofer picks up on the seasonal atmosphere that is full of increased expectations for the future. She combines subjective projections with collective rites that are immanent of the production of desires and thereby designs a setting that simulates a speculative bubble. The exhibition comprises the installation '*The state of long-term expectation*' restated (2013), centrally placed as a circular arrangement of office tables that display discrete objects – gift boxes, coffee mugs, and cases for office equipment – which share the quality of being empty containers. The gift boxes are not meant to be opened, they might fuel speculations on their contents, the actual *gifts*, which are hereby assigned inestimable and thus infinite values. The gift wrappers' opacity contrasts with the transparency of the equally displayed cases for papers, pencils, and other tools of white-collar productivity, as with the empty coffee cups bearing inscriptions resemblant to popular catchphrases on mugs designed to raise (entrepreneurial) spirits and calculated optimism. In fact, they are quotes taken from the macroeconomic writings of John Maynard Keynes, who in times of the Great Depression refused to give long-term calculations and economic forecasts. Keynes was convinced that we cannot make definite statements about future prospects, because – as he wrote in 1937 – “we simply do not know”.

The spatial composition is surrounded by a series of still life photographs showing some of the same objects in different arrangements, reflecting a weighting of alternative scenarios, and thereby practicing usury of possibilities. A second series of photographs depicts lampions and party balloons in the style of classical portraits. The hallow balloons serve as screens onto which one can project all one's gleeful anticipation of an upcoming event that calls for a celebration. Meanwhile the photographs' titles, *High Potential I–V* (2013), evoke a common expression in the corporate world for emerging talents who, however, still have to prove their skills and gifts. The Keynesian abstractness of expectations for the future in relation to the current state of affairs is reflected in these pictures and assemblages, which only reveal their concrete meaning in their specific constellation of desire, exchange and the production of wants.

--Seth Weiner

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