

FRANÇOIS GHEBALY GALLERY

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“Michael Müller: Werke/Works”

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Michael Müller: *Werke/Works*, installation view at Chung King Projects / *Diktatur der Form*, 2008

In his first solo exhibition in the US, German artist Michael Müller (who has shows running concurrently in Düsseldorf and London), presents pairs of drawings and small paintings that not only converse, but complete each other. Best known for his work with drawing and text, Müller employs the act of drawing as an instrument of translation. Using each medium like a dialect of a mother tongue, he teases out exquisite variations in texture, perception, and understanding.

Müller's nine-part series (*1 a:m_*) *Reflecting on Pink Elephants* (all works 2008) is a restrained play of mirrored images. In *Part 3: Reflektion zu einem Fleck (Reflection of a blot)*, a small, high gloss painting of a Rorschach-inspired ink-blot on wood is echoed by an ethereal pencil drawing. Although it is discernibly the same image, the taut, hand-wrought scribbles imbue the drawing with a dreamlike, otherworldly quality. In *Part 4: Diktatur der Form (Dictatorship of the form)*, a small piece of wood is painted a glossy white while the corresponding drawing is an exercise in compulsive mark making: the entire sheet is covered with small, delicately hatched pencil markings.

While Müller's work has clear formalist undertones, the exhibition does not suffer from a lack of humor or compassion. The two-part work *Corner Love* consists of a gestural gouache of an angler fish and a sculpture of a renegade minimalist cube snared on a fishing hook. One of the most gripping pieces is *Der Versuch unter Hypnose abstrakt zu sein (The attempt to be abstract under hypnosis)*, a loving video meditation on the act of drawing, propelled by a minimal, ambient score. Three drawings produced during the making of the film accompany the projection in the mezzanine gallery.