

CONRADI

ASIATISCHE ADLERNASE

7.9. - 6.10. 2012

Thomas Jeppe (1984) is a painter and sculptor with a background in publishing and cultural studies. His practice engages aspects of cultural production and transition, where strategies of appropriation develop into semantic reconstruction. Through traditional portraiture, laborious formal abstraction paintings and highly-finished sculpture, Jeppe's works become props; critical tools pointing to cultural fissures while underscoring their own nature as theatrical constructions in a secondary role to 'the bigger story'.

Asiatische Adlernase began with an interview made in 2010 with a German gallerist who left the art world in search of a prestigious cultural form with a foundation of objective reasoning. He found this in Taiwanese tea, and subsequent attempts to introduce this practice to Germany were confounded by a broad range of cultural structures - primarily stemming from the clichéd divide, East and West. Informed by the themes of master culture, vernacular rituals, anti-globalism and the difficulties of cultural transposition, Jeppe travelled to Taiwan in 2012 to conduct his own research on tea and its surrounding context.

The exhibition features six large-scale paintings based on a lamp from the reading room of a Nineteenth Century Taipei mansion. Though simple in form, the series cannot be readily classified, presenting an uneasy combination of false geometry and unidentifiable fruits and vessels. Monochrome in thick gloss enamel, with artist-made two-tone frames, these paintings become an analogy for cultural incommensurability.

An earnest re-creation of Jean Honoré-Fragonard's *Der Philosoph* oversees the analogy; a laborious enlargement of a proto-Impressionist anomaly of the Rococo era, a stand-in for emphatically Western tradition, knowledge, and anachronism. Together, these pictures are housed within a Fachwerk architectural installation, an icon of early-Renaissance European houses, making visible the ordinarily hidden frameworks of construction.

An artist book has been published for the occasion of the exhibition by Edition Taube.

Thomas Jeppe lived in Hamburg in 2010 with a grant from Fleetinsel Gastetier, when he also made the show *The Peoples Poet: Prevention of Education Through Poetry* with Thomas Baldischwyler at Conradi. He will be represented at NADA Miami in December 2012 with his Mexican Gallery Curro & Poncho (Guadalajara).