

Anna Oppermann
Paradoxical Intentions
(To Lie the Blue Down from Sky)

23.01. – 16.04.2016
Opening: Friday, 22. January 2016

**The face and the rear side of beautiful appearance.
Anna Oppermann's ensemble "Paradoxical Intentions" at Gallery Barbara Thumm**

It all began with a make-up mirror. Anna Oppermann devised and developed her artistic strategy of building ensembles from observation and analysis of optical reflections. By the late 1960s, Oppermann used a rectangular, plastic rimmed looking glass in order to duplicate, shift and expand her perception of reality, experienced as intrinsically cramped and angst-inducing, until reaching the virtual and imaginary. Simultaneously she concerned herself with the role of the artist, the meaning of the image and the economic conditions of art-production.

Her late, large-scaled ensemble "Paradoxe Intentionen – Das Blaue vom Himmel herunterlügen" combines both levels of perception and reflection. From 1988 to 1992 the artist deployed an extensive panorama, thematically based on the illusiveness of aesthetics and the quest for truth, prettiness and ugliness, honesty and lie, rendition and coulisse. The initial object of the installation is a glassy shrine in royal blue, with a red decor on it. Faceted pictures of the object pervade the arrangement.



Interspersed shapes and splinters of mirrors and colourful glass intensify the kaleidoscopic effect on the pictorial space.

In 1991 Anna Oppermann made "Paradoxe Intentionen" accessible to the public for the first time in an exhibition at the "Stadtgalerie" in Kiel. Here, the space behind the central array also became an integral part of the work. The viewers could walk into the installation and around the walls. The panels and the spaces in front of them were furnished with the installation's elements and objects. The visitor could see the flipsides of canvasses and deposited painting utensils. From behind a glass cabinet, the view was led back into the centre of the ensemble. At Galerie Barbara Thumm the artist's last design of the ensemble is adapted to the given gallery space, though reversed: The viewers enter through the "stage door". Facing the rear side of the ensemble, the visitors will be given access from the edges and are invited to enter Anna Oppermann's kaleidoscope on truth and lies.

Ute Vorkoeper

Paradoxical Intentions

Lying the blue down from the sky
1988 – 1992

Subject matter, key words:

Paradoxical intention: »I never lie«. I can't bewitch things and turn them blue; certain theories of German romanticism: (the blue flower, Heinrich von Ofterdingen), compared and placed in the context of the methodology of my ensembles; »A.O. – portrait – ugly – of Alex O.«; a beautiful receptacle; reflected, self-estranged reality; touched-up reality; a kaleidoscope.

Public presentations:

Kunstverein Heidelberg (1990)
Städtische Galerie im Sophienhof, Kiel (1991)
Museum of Contemporary Art,
Sydney / Australia (1994)
Schloß Celle, Gotische Halle (1998)

The most important, fundamental objects,
with various associations:

1. Expressions and slogans using the adjective »blue« (see title).
2. Plants: (a) *Tagetes* (has a scent of carnations, crème caramel, sweat, sperm, and fresh bread rolls); (b) *Indigofera tinctoria* (from which a blue dye was made by adding the urine of boys approaching puberty).
3. Reference ensemble: »Pudding or soap – ensemble concerning honesty or the different aspects of sheep.« But, just a moment: »Lying the blue down from the sky« is only relevant to the sheep-ensemble because it refers to honesty and truth, and I've already collected various quotations on the keyword »blue«.
This is the »honest truth«: The blue slipped into the »pudding-soap-sheep« image through the associations of soap, cleanness, honesty, innocent little lamb, bell wether, silly sheep, scapegoat, etc. And how did the soap get into the sheep-ensemble? It had been placed in an old-fashioned pudding bowl, in the shape of a sheep, turning it into a soap-dish. The colour blue, again, is a favourite for advertising cleaning materials (advertising is truth-twisting exaggeration), since people associate blue with cleanliness, purity and clarity.
4. A glass shrine (found-object): no-one can imagine its former use, except that it is beautiful.

It consists mainly of blue tinted glass and pieces of mirror. Looking at it, a bluetinted reality comes into existence – reflected reality, parts of one's face, endlessly repeated, changed by light, the surroundings and the mood in the face of the viewer.

Dimensions of the shrine: 39 x 39 x 48 cm

The decorative ornaments and sacred character of the shrine must simply be put up with, although its schmaltz calls out for some dry bread – and so: 5. A photo (dim. 12.5 x 17.7 cm) of Anna O., dated January 1976; a very unflattering one, taken in profile. The text on the back of the snapshot, written in blue, felt-tip pen, declares it as a birthday present: »Voucher: to do for a whole day whatever Anna wants. sig. Alex.« Memories of distant times, of special mother-son relationships awaken. »sig.« probably meant an eventual way out in case the recipient's wishes were unacceptable.

6. To lie the blue back into the sky.

Anna Oppermann (1990)

(Translation by Linda Maar and Bernice Murphy)