

Henrik Potter
b. 1984, Lausanne
Lives and works in London

Henrik Potter's new series of paintings begin with a rectangular framework, which he secures to the wall with articulated brackets. Via hinges, this initial framework supports two smaller doors to its left and right. Each door is made from horizontal and vertical lattices of wood, over which either muslin or oil skin is stretched. The translucency of this fabric is light dependent, sometimes the skeleton of the wooden frame is evident, and other times the muslin or oil skin is opaque. Each painting has the capacity to be opened and closed like a cupboard, and they are also able to be rotated on a horizontal axis within a 180 degree radius. With your willing assistance, they become kinetic objects.

Henrik has made four paintings for his second solo exhibition at Lucas Hirsch's Düsseldorf gallery. Here, they unfold both spatially and visually: a case of site and sight, if you will. Given their ability to be moved and opened, viewing them is like witnessing a scene in constant flux, like how seeing a door ajar prompts you to think of who occupied the space before. With a preference for the vantage point a wall offers, these new works retain some formal resemblance to his previous paravent paintings. What distinguishes these paintings is their differential sameness, which is to say that while they each have an identifiable character, they also retain a sense of family resemblance. This paradoxically comes from their time spent together, just like one's desire for individuality comes from time spent with a sibling. For Henrik, this seriality creates a subtle relational camaraderie.

Henrik's practice is characterised by an economy of means, he consciously deploys modest materials, and runs with the implications of each decisive action he makes. Actions are contingent acts. It is not about an end game: more of a chicken and egg game, where it's inconclusive as to which action came first. In this new series, there are many decisions to be made: the number of lattices on each framework; the configuration of the wood; the selection of the grain; the colour of fabric, to name a few. There are a multitude of surfaces, and therefore, multiple planes of possibilities. Sometimes the muslin is dyed, treated as a surface to receive paint, or presented raw, as is. In *Know this. No, this! / 1ère pensée*, the 'back' or 'front' of the 'doors' (depending on how you see it) are marked by slithers of painted lines, marking out the edges of the framework.

In and around these marks are words such as “tender” and “know this”, while a list of initials adorns the ‘back’ of the central framework. This gesture signals the return of language in Henrik’s work.

Just as the paintings can provide a visual stimulus, they can also take it away. *Presence / Thought #4* is a conspicuous outlier, refusing to perform. Tied up in a pale pink bow, faint ghostly impressions of pigment mark the front, but its inside is sealed off. In 1916, Marcel Duchamp asked his friend Walter Arensberg to place a secret object inside a ball of string, which was then held between two sheets of metal. This became *With Hidden Noise* (1916). Duchamp also talked of his works as ‘delays’. Could Henrik be presenting a delayed reveal/conceal? Like a gift, full of tender potentiality and promise, but to be opened in due course. Perhaps.

- Robert Spragg

clockwise:

Know this. No, this! / 1ère pensée, 2022

Poplar wood, muslin, oil paint, hinges

180 x 100 x 8 cm (closed)

Zweiter Gedanke / Time from the ground, 2022

Poplar wood, oil skin, sand, oil paint, hinges

180 x 100 x 8 cm (closed)

Presence / Thought #4, 2022

Poplar wood, muslin, oil paint, hinges

180 x 100 x 8 cm (closed)

Meditation #3, in sour lemon and the autumn sun, 2022

Poplar wood, muslin, oil paint, hinges

180 x 100 x 8 cm (closed)

Thoughts and meditations #5, 2022

Stickers applied to gallery