

ENG

Regionale 25 | Fr. 29.11.2024 – So. 12.01.2025

Si Mi Ya

Group Exhibition with works by Paul Ahl, Christina Sperling and Jasmine Tutum

Paul Ahl

Paul Ahl is interested in unnoticed everyday objects, chance as a factor in the moulding process and material experiments. His works are characterised by the use of found objects and a sophisticated deployment of fine, pigmented concrete mixtures.

Sculpturally interesting observations in the environment can provoke a multi-stage working process that leads to a work (2.).

Ahl uses found objects as a provocative gesture to question the definition of art and to expand it. To this end, he sometimes integrates them into his works and/or uses them as form-giving elements. Ahl uses some of the discarded and industrially manufactured everyday objects found on the street (readymades) as casting moulds for concrete. This allows him to lend visibility and permanence to the formal subtleties of their traces of use.

Beyond the material and the form, Ahl uses concrete and readymades as carriers of meaning to reflect on the everyday world, for example on our consumption of certain stimulants (3.) or the inflationary use of pictograms (1.) in communication. Based on this logic, found objects (5.) can now also be independent works of his.

Ahl often works in series. Each series is based on a conceptual commonality, such as the use of a particular element (1. and 3.) or a particularly fine concrete mixture (4.).

Umverpackung

The starting point for the two works in Ahl's *Umverpackungen* series was found secondary packaging. These readymades protect already packaged products. While primary packaging is usually designed and aesthetically interesting, secondary packaging is raw and functional. However, Ahl is particularly interested in the sculptural and raw quality of these mostly unnoticed and carelessly discarded objects.

1. Umverpackung 209 / 211, 2023

For this work, Ahl combined two pieces of secondary packaging into one object. They lay next to each other in the studio for a long time until the artist had the sparking idea of transforming them into raw smileys. He glued the two objects together, poured fine concrete in two colours into it, resulting in a smiley shape form. Ahl intuitively chooses the colour pigments for colouring the concrete based on a particular work. Here he wanted to contrast the bright smiley yellow with a dirty earth colour. In terms of content, the artist wants to confront us with the excessive use of smiley faces.

3. Umverpackung 254, 2024

The starting point for this work was secondary packaging of Red Bull aluminium cans. As a rectangular cardboard box, it has the character of a picture, which Ahl reinforces by hanging it on the wall. Ahl sprayed the inside of the cardboard with spray paint to create the association of acid. He then filled the cardboard with green-coloured concrete. The green colour is associated with poison. The sprayed surface destroyed the

concrete skin and inscribed itself as an acid stain.

To intensify the effect of the corroding acid, Ahl poured another pigment into the concrete, creating nuanced dark green colour gradients. The fine dents in the cardboard left by the Red Bull cans, create fine relief structures on the surface of Ahl's wall sculpture. The work invites us to think about the consumption of the best-selling energy drink.

2. *Zaunecke, 2024*

Zaunecke is an artistic reproduction of a situation that Ahl discovered on the way to his studio. He was fascinated by the sculptural quality of construction fences and their function as leaf and waste catchers. He began by photographing them. This led to the idea of recreating them as a work, thus bringing the everyday demarcation in the streets of urban space into the exhibition.

5. *Lochblech 2, 2024*

For his most recent work, the artist uses a found object that he discovered by chance at the Dreisam a few days before the exhibition was set up. Ahl found the spray-painted signs, which look like collages on the sheet metal, very interesting, since he also uses the spray technique in his own work. The sprayed colour allows him to incorporate uncontrolled and accidental moments into his artistic form process. Fascinated by the sculptural quality of the perforated sheet, created by great force, Ahl made the object part of his exhibition. As an everyday object that was exposed to aggression at the Dreisam, the work brings the everyday reality of unsupervised places into the exhibition space

4. *Dispersion 96, 2024*

The starting point for this work was a small piece of foam he found from

a mattress. Ahl built a mould frame for it, which he lined with the folded piece and casted it in concrete. The result was a mould reminiscent of a landscape formation. On some spots the fine concrete bonded with the foam, a material experiment created by chance that fascinated Ahl. For him, the intimate connection between concrete and foam is a magical moment that creates a new world. For Ahl, the unique form that emerges from the material combination is the highest expression of the sculptural.

Christina Sperling

7. *Ohne Titel, 2024*

For her multi-part floor work, Christina Sperling has brought together used everyday objects and photographs. She has come across them over the last year and a half. She found some of them on the street. Sperling recovered earth and dust from her immediate surroundings, next to her studio and flat. She acquired the rest on digital second-hand markets such as eBay. Sperling's prosaic minimalist presentation turns the sometimes banal and kitschy objects into cultural artefacts that make us think about collective dreams and our culture.

Objects:

Like a post-modern flâneur, Christina Sperling allows herself to be inspired by incidental objects, based on her moods. She took the used napkin, for example, with her after a visit to a restaurant in Berlin. The artist discovered the book pages, the shoe box, the plastic snow globes and the polystyrene leg splint outside, the latter during a visit to the Venice Biennale. The other objects: Pearl earrings, hair extensions, porcelain horses, trophies from company sporting events, came to her

attention through everyday experiences and she subsequently bought them.

With the earth from the studio environment and the 50-year-old dust from renovation work, Sperling also shows organic materials for the first time in her attempt to inventory the world through things. Most of the objects on display are industrially manufactured mass products that can be read as references to our presence and at the same time reveal something about our habits, customs, desires or rituals that have become taken for granted.

Combination:

Sperling collects existing objects that she has not produced or altered herself and uses the associations that cling to them as components for her compositions. The surreal-looking overall picture of her presentation opens up new experiences and associative spaces. Spaces of thought, immaterial spaces, which make the tension between the objects both tangible and visible, occupy the artist in her process of arranging things: How do we perceive? How do we differentiate? How do we shape representational aesthetics?

Presentation:

Nouveau Realisme artists such as Arman presented consumer objects in an art context as accumulated assemblages with which they drew attention to mass consumption. Sperling, on the other hand, presents her objects in a minimalistic and isolated manner, as if they were part of a museum collection. Some are placed on large rectangular metal pedestals, reminiscent of displays of precious goods.

The presentation levels the different objects and questions their hierarchy in significance. The banal objects appear to be of equal value, but their individuality as cultural artefacts is emphasised. Through the minimalist form, the artist also draws attention to the question of what conclusions future archaeologists might draw from our civilisation on the basis of such objects.

8. & 9. Ohne Titel, 2021

The two photographs present wooden drawers that show traces from years of use - scratches and faded areas that have formed on the surfaces of the wood through movement and storage. A quiet but concise story of interaction and time is told here, which reveals something of the human presence just as much as a portrait or a product.

Jasmine Tutum

In her artistic practice, Jasmine Tutum explores nonlinear narratives within the context of Black Feminist Hauntology. This concept examines how the "ghosts" of the past haunt our present and shape our visions of the future. Her work focuses on challenging and distorting the codes and meanings inscribed onto othered bodies, delving into new perspectives on resistance, memory, and healing. Through this lens, she confronts the historical and ongoing catastrophes of supremacist culture, heteropatriarchy, and misogyny.

6. Si Mi Ya: Presence in the Absence of Flesh/In the Rhythm of Loud Spaces

Her video piece, accompanied by sounds from her latest album *The Other Others*, takes its starting point in a poetic reflection on her own

surroundings and past, framed as an auto-ethnographic inquiry. In *Si Mi Ya* (translated as "See me here"), Tutum investigates the relationship between body, space, and memory, as well as listening as a decolonial practice. Expansive, rhythmic soundscapes and ethereal dub poetry intertwine and merge with flickering, distorted photographs of the artist. This immersive audiovisual experience becomes a space for reflection, where the roles of listeners and speakers are critically examined: Who is listening? Who is being listened to? And from what standpoint?

With *Si Mi Ya: Presence in the Absence of Flesh / In the Rhythm of Loud Spaces*, Tutum calls for collective attention. Her visual and sonic worlds challenge and disrupt dominant ways of seeing and hearing, critically questioning and renegotiating them. In doing so, Tutum creates practices of empowerment that transcend oppression, objectification, and racialization.

Paul Ahl was born 1983 in Heilbronn, Germany. He lives and works in Freiburg, Germany. After completing an apprenticeship as a stonemason and stone sculptor, Ahl graduated in 2014 with a degree in sculpture from the Edith Maryon Art School in Freiburg.

Selected Exhibitions: PEAC Museum (Freiburg), Pförtnerhaus (Freiburg), Galerie Marek Krlewski (Freiburg), Kunst Raum Riehen (Riehen, Switzerland), DELPHI_space (Freiburg), and others.

Jasmine Tutum is an interdisciplinary artist based in Freiburg. Born in Tokyo, Japan, she grew up in Kingston, Jamaica. Tutum studied art history, photography, and French literature.

Selected Exhibitions: Galerie für Gegenwartskunst (Freiburg), Morat Institut (Freiburg), Tollhaus (Karlsruhe), International Beckett Festival (Freiburg), Fusion Festival (Neustrelitz), Textbühne Cafe Leopold, MuseumsQuartier (Vienna), Regionale 22 (Freiburg).

Christina Sperling was born 1989 in Omsk, Russia. She lives and works in Freiburg, Germany. In 2021, she completed her degree in fine arts at Macromedia University in Freiburg, where she has been teaching since 2023. Since 2022, Sperling is co-directing the Freiburg-based off-space *Kaiserwache* together with other artists.

Selected Exhibitions: Basel Social Club Artist Market (Basel, Switzerland), Freiburg Art Fair, T66