

ADRIAN SAUER

Colour and Space

16.02 – 29.04.2023

Adrian Sauer (Berlin, 1976) presents a careful and analytical look at the world through a wide range of motifs, including architecture, elements of landscape, artificial constructions, and numerous genres that span from classical photography to computer-generated art. The artist conveys the ways in which the elements of photography appear and function; how they present us an ever-changing image of the world.

256 Graustufen (256 Shades of Gray) is the central work of *Colour and Space*, the exhibition currently being held at Galería Helga de Alvear.

The title of the work establishes what is to be seen: a series of gray tones which are gradated from dark to light. Anyone expecting visual opulence from the photographs will surely be slightly disappointed. Ironically, however, the promise of opulence that is associated to the brittle abstraction of the 256 shades could not be more pronounced. Indeed, Sauer disposes a landscape of possible gray tones between two outer points of pure black and pure white in an effort to account for every single hue. Should one compare this installation to a visual test chart equal in scale, then one must be more precise: it is not the camera that is being tested here, but rather our own ability to see.¹

The situation becomes more complex when color is added to the grayscale. Nevertheless, digital images in color are also based on the same principle: the division of image information into clearly separated pixels. The work *16.777.216 Farben in rot, grün und blau* (16,777,216 Colors in Red, Green, and Blue) distributes the digitally colored space over three images, demonstrating the creative potential of generative photography while simultaneously overtaxing the viewer's senses.

In the series *16.777.216 Farben in unterschiedlichen Anordnungen* (16,777,216 Colors in Different Arrangements), every image contains all 8-bit-RGB colors exactly once. However, we see completely different motifs. Thus, the issues that lie at the core of digital photography become apparent: its ability to transform, change, and adapt. There is no such thing as a true image. We must live with these contradictions.

Adrian Sauer circumscribes our notion of photography. His individual works move along the edges of what we understand this medium to be. In doing so, he tackles questions regarding the culture of digital images with a minimalist expression.

¹ Steffen Siegel: *Building Blocks for an Artistic Theory of Photography*. Published in: *Camera Austria International 160/2022*. Graz: Camera Austria, 2022.