

THOMAS LOCHER

We have too many things and not enough forms

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In his objects and tableaux, Thomas Locher examines the relationship between language and image. Since the 1990s the artist has been exploring topics such as law and justice, legitimation, and legitimacy. Locher works in a self-reflective way and analyzes the role that law plays in the construction of society, community, and history. His works encourage viewers to participate in the reflection of this interrelation.

We have too many things and not enough forms ties with past projects on law and justice (for instance, articles of human rights and fundamental rights in the German Basic Law).

The backgrounds of the new works are reproductions of European art history, including the genre of “justice paintings”, among others. Their secular depictions of legal truth-seeking, their narratives of good and bad government, and representations of ideal existence are taken from different European cultural and historical periods. They portray an ongoing artistic and political interest in questions of judicial representability and the development and formation of law, which is never going to be complete.

The text panels applied onto the reproductions deal with questions of violence, community, communities of law, and justice. What the concepts in these works have in common is that their contents and meanings elude direct representation. They resist conceptualization as an unequivocal and positive appropriation. The combination of historical backgrounds and commentary aims to create a plastic, stretched, and differential space of meaning that is dedicated less to the purposeful and pragmatic than to the processual and that which has not yet been decided. Indeed, the fleeting, ghostly, and mutually contradictory meanings form a relationship with reality: although various forms of violence are defined within law and law itself produces violence, an essential task of law is to limit social violence. Without a notion of justice, law lacks any sense. Without a conception of community, society is inconceivable.