

PRESS RELEASE: PIA DEHNE - PROJECT BLUE BOOK

AJLART presents the solo show PIA DEHNE - PROJECT BLUE BOOK at Potsdamerstr. 98a,
2. Courtyard, 10115 Berlin Mitte.

Opening: 15th of November 2013 // 6 - 10 pm

Exhibition: 16th of November - 21st of December //

Tuesday to Saturday 2 - 6 pm

and upon appointment

Project Blue Book was the U.S. Air Force name for an investigation into ufo sightings between 1947 and 1969. By the time it ended in 1969, the project had documented 12,618 UFO reports, concluding that most were either misidentifications of natural phenomena and conventional aircraft or a mild form of mass hysteria.

Inspired by the perplexing history of these UFO sightings, Pia Dehne's new series of drawings and paintings explores the relationship between art and metaphysics with contemporary visual language. In the majority of these paintings, aerial shots place the viewer, godlike, high above scenes of the earth overlaid with silver discs. These silver-gilt discs in their reflectivity invoke the possibility of an unidentified flying object. Their shimmering silver surfaces insinuate an entrance into a realm beyond both human experience and visible reality. Similarly, Dehne's graphite drawings on black paper cloak her ideas and shapes in mystery, as if inserting memories or flashbacks from a dream into the present. Dehne explains, „This is an exploration of images that are part of our collective consciousness without any of these images having been proved to be real. I am also interested in how and why such images exist in our society. For example, why is it that they have such a strong imprint in our minds that they have become part of our reality?“

The new subject of UFOs in Dehne's work connects seamlessly with her previous camouflage-themed work, although with these UFOs she has changed her painterly theme to deception within the subject. If camouflage describes the best possible meshing of one's own appearance with the environment in order to deceive a natural enemy, an encounter with UFOs can be understood as deception and reality

AJLART

since 2012

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at once. Dehne's camouflage works represent optical illusion that moves between abstraction and hyperrealism, mingling form and content as they are viewed from various distances. The UFO theme shifts this exploration to the realm of the paranormal, where gods, spirits, invisible powers and parallel universes escape the grip of scientific explanation yet cannot be denied. Thus she addresses the quality of a human perception still limited by the rational -- a perception that has yet to encompass the expansive capabilities of the human mind.

Her earlier camouflage series is marked by a calculated painterly consideration of the relationship between figure and ground whereby she integrates a detailed abstract pattern with figurative elements. In comparison this new work seems determined by a translucent light and the contrast and play of open color fields and focused detail. Dehne developed her artistic work from the cryptological style of the Düsseldofer Kunstakademie, where she received her Master Degree, studying with Markus Lüpertz between 1984 and 1988. In 1999 she moved to New York City and currently lives in the Catskills region of upstate New York. Her work has been the subject of several group and solo exhibitions in New York including her first solo show, Naked City in 2004 at Deitch Projects, plus Country Life in 2008, and Eve of Destruction in 2010 at Blackston, and most recently Vanishing Act at Charles Banks Gallery in 2011. Project Blue Book at AJLart is the first exhibition of Pia Dehne's work in Germany in 10 years.

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