

Isabell Heimerdinger

Skies of intense, uncontaminated beauty



14/09/2021 - 23/10/2021

In the exhibition *Skies of intense, uncontaminated beauty*, the artist surprises us with a new group of works in which, as in her films, installations, performances, and photographs, she poses questions about the conditions of artistic production. Isabell Heimerdinger has transformed Italian artist Salvo's painted vases into ceramic objects—a process in which the artist translates the painted image into a new medium.

With this group of works, Heimerdinger finds an artistic answer to questions about the similarities and differences between painting and sculpture. This does not refer to the difference between an object of utility and an art object but to the dialectic between form/idea (Greek *eidos*) and image/representation (Greek *eidolon*). These two terms stem from Plato's theory of images. *Eidos* is the sensually perceptible reality of forms, types, or shapes and can also include the general idea of an object, whereas *eidolon* provides a concrete depiction of *eidos*.

Applying these two terms to Heimerdinger's new group of works shows that here, too, we are concerned with the general idea of an object and how it finds expression in a specific medium such as ceramics. Each of the vases, cups, and bowls exhibited here refers to a particular still life by the Italian artist Salvo (1947–2015); each ceramic object by Heimerdinger thus visually corresponds to a specific painting by Salvo. The Italian artist, who also worked across media like Heimerdinger, depicts the idea of a vase's form in his paintings—its *eidos*. Heimerdinger's works move beyond this realm of forms only perceivable by sight. Salvo paints the image of a vase, which might refer to a real or fictitious, nonexistent vase.

The artist converts illusionistically painted two-dimensionality into realistic three-dimensionality. She remodels the form and colourful nature of a painted vase into the object-like three-dimensionality of a real vase. She plans a real object. In doing so, she expands the idea of the vase's form—its *eidos*—by letting it become a real, three-dimensional representation. Heimerdinger broadens the relationship between the painted image and the ceramic object with an epistemological structure that is enabled only because of the interplay between two different media. On the one hand, she achieves the greatest possible similarity through the form of the vase's painted and ceramic *eidos*, even though in Salvo's still lifes we can only see the front of the object—see but not touch it. Heimerdinger's ceramics, on the other hand, allow us to observe all sides and aspects, including a view from above and into the object (insight), by simultaneously using all our senses. This possibility of

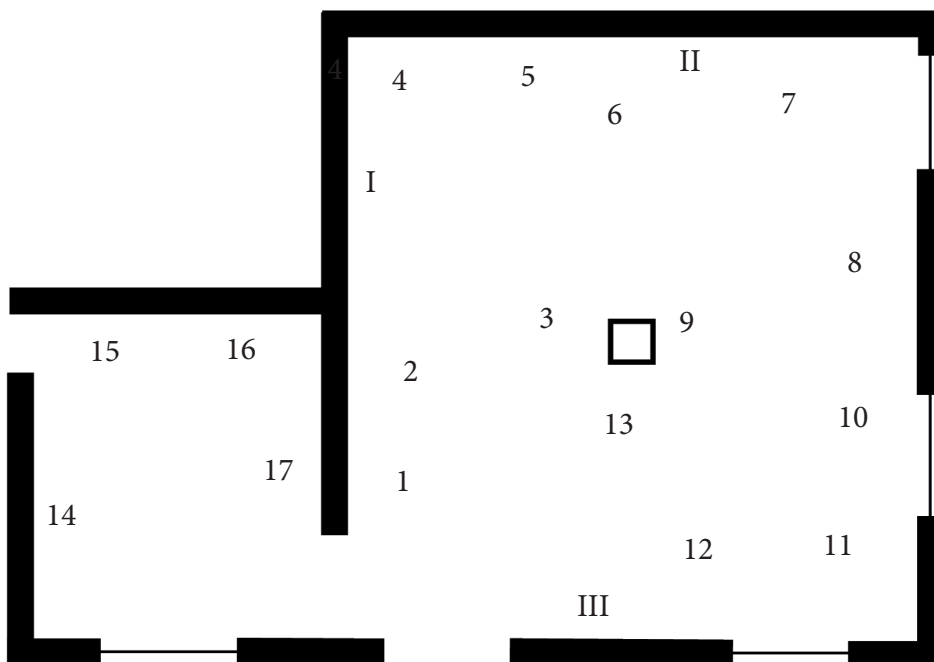
seeing an object from all sides was the central argument of sculpture in the competition of the arts, the so-called *paragone*. In contrast to painting, sculpture was said to have the advantage of showing an object from all sides. Heimerdinger too emphasises the three-dimensionality of her visualisation. The second step of transformation into physicality is the colourful surface; the artist translates Salvo's oil paint into a multicoloured glaze. Here, too, Salvo is concerned only with the idea of the vase's colours and surface. With the glaze, Heimerdinger composes a specific colour application that differs from Salvo's characteristic matt-applied oil paint in surface texture, expression of shadows, and consistency. Like Salvo, she is a painter when she applies the glazes. Her skill is evident in the nuanced application of colour. The crucial difference lies in the interplay of colours, which is difficult to predict before firing, and which does not strive for complete resemblance to the painted form. She determines how close she approaches Salvo's reference.

The sculptural object expands the painted idea of the form ("thing-in-itself") many times over. The presentation of the ceramics is the final element, both in terms of colour and composition. Heimerdinger positions her works on marble slabs in various colours, which in turn are placed on plinths made of building material. Thus, they are placed on two different types of materials one might attribute to the different branches of art, sculpture, and architecture.

In the works shown here, Heimerdinger concentrates and intertwines several temporal dimensions. On the one hand, she draws on Salvo's formal language, which is stylistically rooted in the 1980s. The Italian conceptual artist's oil paintings differ aesthetically and in terms of media from the art of the time in which they were created. The aesthetic of the painted vases' forms is more typical of designs from the 1950s or 1960s. Heimerdinger's group of ceramic works, however, is produced today in the 21st century.

A major concern pursued by Heimerdinger in her films is to grant the viewer an unbiased gaze. In this group of works, she expands the desire for an open perspective by posing a philosophical question only art can address: Does unbiased viewing exist?

Hannelore Paflik-Huber



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1 - *Skies of Intense, Uncontaminated Beauty 17*, 2021, glazed ceramic, marble, foam, 42 x 69 x 60 cm

2 - *Skies of Intense, Uncontaminated Beauty 18*, 2021, glazed ceramic, marble, foam, 23 x 49.5 x 39 cm

3 - *Skies of Intense, Uncontaminated Beauty 22*, 2021, glazed ceramic, marble, foam, 26 x 41 x 30 cm

4 - *Skies of Intense, Uncontaminated Beauty 19*, 2021, glazed ceramic, marble, foam, 25 x 75.5 x 67 cm

5 - *Skies of Intense, Uncontaminated Beauty 14*, 2021, glazed ceramic, marble, foam, 29.5 x 70 x 64 cm

6 - *Skies of Intense, Uncontaminated Beauty 15*, 2021, glazed ceramic, 23.5 x 111.5 x 28.5 cm

7 - *Skies of Intense, Uncontaminated Beauty 20*, 2021, glazed ceramic, marble, foam, 24 x 58.5 x 44.5 cm

8 - *Skies of Intense, Uncontaminated Beauty 21*, 2021, glazed ceramic, marble, foam, 25.5 x 62 x 60 cm

9 - *Skies of Intense, Uncontaminated Beauty 16*, 2021, glazed ceramic, marble, foam, 20 x 49 x 46 cm

10 - *Skies of Intense, Uncontaminated Beauty 13*, 2021, glazed ceramic, marble, foam, 11 x 51 x 50 cm

11 - *Skies of Intense, Uncontaminated Beauty 23*, 2021, glazed ceramic, marble, foam, 21.5 x 56.5 x 50 cm

12 - *Skies of Intense, Uncontaminated Beauty 25*, 2021, glazed ceramic, marble, foam, 25 x 73 x 61 cm

13 - *Skies of Intense, Uncontaminated Beauty 24*, 2021, glazed ceramic, marble, foam, 15.5 x 52 x 50 cm

14 - *Summer Look (Stromboli)*, 2014, postcards on board, 85 x 60 cm

15 - *Summer Look (Stromboli)*, 2014, postcards on board, 85 x 60 cm

16 - *Summer Look (Stromboli)*, 2014, postcards on board, 85 x 60 cm

17 - *Summer Look (Stromboli)*, 2014, postcards on board, 85 x 60 cm

Salvo

I - *Luglio*, 2009, oil on canvas, 40 x 30 cm

II - *Primavera*, 2015, oil on board, 67 x 52.5 cm

III - *Untitled*, 1978/1980, tempera on paper, 30 x 23 cm

Office

Isabell Heimerdinger

18 - *Posacenere*, 2021, glazed ceramic, 3 x 12 x 12 cm, ed. of 10

19 - *Macchiato*, 2021, glazed ceramic, 5 x 10 x 12 cm, ed. of 10

Salvo

IV - *Grottaglie*, 2005, oil on cardboard, 35 x 25 cm