Earlier this year, German painter Thomas Scheibitz was included in an exhibition titled Painting at the Edge of the World at the Walker Art Center. In the name suggests, curator Douglas Fogle poses the question, “Where does the edge of this painting, this canvas, this world begin?” Thus, the notion of detachment aptly describes the experience of the viewer when looking at Scheibitz’s work. His fractured, complex, and vibrant works capture the anxiety and energy of the contemporary era. The brightly colored paintings, drawings, and sculptures are abstracted renderings of familiar objects (flowers, buildings, landscapes) that embed the traditional duality of abstraction and representation, popular imagery and art history, reality and dream. The difference between subject and object is blurred. It is not necessarily clear where one thing becomes another and another thing, etc. The viewer cannot know where the edge or the center is because the canvas seems to start somewhere on the edge of the canvas. The space appears singular and yet connected to a larger environment, one that is dualistic, contradictory, and contradictory.

It seems as if one cannot mount an exhibition of painting now without questioning the relevance of the medium. In the text I wrote for a Peter Doig exhibition in early 2001, I asked, “What is it about painting that provokes such ambivalence? What makes a painting artificial? What is it about painting that means one looks at his paintings—abstractions, landscapes, figures, and architecture—the seventeenth-century art to commercial logos and sports photography. The longer the hyperconnectivity is commonplace, isolation exists.

The notion of purity has long since been refuted and abolished. The artist himself, however, Scheibitz uses oil paint and cannot be read. Instead, they are compositional tools like details, flowers, or language—or more specifically, letters—sometimes appears in Scheibitz’s paintings. He works, “When I use letters in a painting, they have meaning and cannot be read. Instead, they are components that hold details, flowers, or houses.” In addition to being recognized for his letter and shape, he completed a project of how computers allow movement and manipulation so that letters became mere images, designs, logos.

Thomas Scheibitz
Painting at the Edge of the World
University of California Berkeley Art Museum

November 18, 2001 — January 13, 2002

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Abonnee Diamond (2001) is a landscape. We see a house and the rain and the voice. Blue and red are still large planes of color that constitute underlying thing and pose the possibility that the seemingly serene rural setting is experiencing a storm. Beneath the blue (a kind of dark blue) and red is a thread of the invisible. In Judith Bannister Diamond (2001) comes from the form and rise by the viewer. The space is a changing notion of reality can be experienced in Scheibitz’s work. What one thinks and knows (and even) changes depending upon the viewer’s physical or psychological state on a particular moment. The meaning of normality, the
permanence of architecture, and our sense of personal security are irrevocably transformed by these paintings, which mirror the disorientation of contemporary existence.

Thomas Scheibitz was born in Radeburg, Germany, in 1968. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in 1996 and Master of Fine Arts Degree in 1998 in Fine Art (Städelschule) in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Scheibitz currently lives and works in Berlin.

Selected Solo Exhibitions

- "Thomas Scheibitz," Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Bielefeld, Germany, 1998
- "Thomas Scheibitz," Galerie Lehmann, Leopoldstrasse, Berlin, Germany, 2000
- "Thomas Scheibitz," Galerie Lehmann, Leopoldstrasse, Berlin, Germany, 2001

Selected Group Exhibitions

- "All of a Sudden II," Galerie Aurel Scheibler, Cologne, Germany, 1997
- "Nebenan und mittendrin," Kunsthalle Dresden, Dresden, Germany, 1998
- "Nebenan und mittendrin," Kunsthalle Berlin, Berlin, Germany, 1998
- "Nebenan und mittendrin," Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Bielefeld, Germany, 1998

Selected Bibliography

- Bannister, Bannister Diefenbach, New York, 2000 (detail); oil and marker on canvas; 96 x 62 in. (244 x 157.5 cm); courtesy of the artist; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York; and Galerie Gebr. Lehmann, Dresden.

Thomas Scheibitz: Matrix Conversations Volume I

Thomas Scheibitz: Matrix Conversations Volume II

The works in "Ortsbegehung: Eberhard Havekost, Frank Nitsche, Thomas Scheibitz" were shown in Dresden. Scheibitz currently lives and works in Berlin.

The MATRIX Program at the UC Berkeley Art Museum is made possible by the generous endowment gift of Phyllis Wattis. Additional donors to the MATRIX Program include the IBM NSF Council on Education, Jen de Hoo, Eric McAllister, and Ears and Aces Foundation.

Phyllis Wattis MATRIX Curator

Pamela Lu will respond to Thomas Scheibitz's paintings with selected readings from her own work on Sunday, December 2, at 4 p.m.

The museum also wishes to thank Goethe-Institut Inter Nationes for its support of the brochure for Thomas Scheibitz/MATRIX 195. The MATRIX Program at the UC Berkeley Art Museum is made possible by the generous endowment gift of Phyllis Wattis.