

HANNU KARJALAINEN / Statement

Colour is an elusive subject matter. It is intangible and abstract as much as it is coded, branded and harnessed for different purposes. I'm particularly interested in how meaning is attributed to colour, and how this mechanism can be exploited by re-contextualization, using colour and its supposed meanings as a critical tool to investigate the world around us.

In the ongoing series of photographs Books (2009-), I've used colours from Johannes Itten's colour wheel to paint books that I have picked up from my bookshelf. As a book is covered behind a thick layer of wet paint - each with one colour from the wheel - it becomes an abstract, unrecognizable object. The only information that we have from the original book is its title. By combining the colour and the information of its content we create an interpretation - however arbitrary that might be.

In the ongoing series of portrait photographs (2008-), I look at fresh paint from the material point of view - attracted by its thick, glossy substance. From afar, the photos might look like ordinary portrait photographs, but on a closer look it becomes clear that the models' clothes have been painted with a thick layer of fresh paint. Looking at painting through photography, its role becomes reversed. The act of painting transforms the clothes into sculptural objects and erases all personal marks from them, creating another layer between the viewer and the object.

Towards An Architect (2010) is a video work inspired by a colour palette designed by the architect and urbanist Le Corbusier for the Swiss wallpaper manufacturer Salubra. The colours, which now are made as a set of wall paints, become symbols of the shortcomings of the modern housing project. In a fictive scene an architect is put into close contact with his own product and has to deal with the critical response to his work.

- Hannu Karjalainen