

PER MÅRTENSSON
KABINETT

November 11 – December 21, 2017

January 10 – February 9, 2018

Vernissage Friday November 10, 2017

Per Mårtensson is a conceptual painter whose works are often based on snapshots taken while walking around his native Malmö or during travels. For *Kabinett*, his third exhibition with the gallery, he presents 4 series of 4 works each plus one work consisting of four panels. Based on steps, lights, reflection and color, the 17 paintings in the show range in format and medium, and remain true to his palette of blacks and whites. Contrast has always been a part of his practice - be it in colors, perception or content.

Mårtensson chose the limitation of four paintings or panels per series to create a rhythm in the *Kabinett* show, to emphasize that all are part of ongoing series. Interested in the possibility and variety of the many different languages of painting coexisting at the same time, the paintings play with various aspects of the abstract tradition. Each individual series received the language suiting the image that was the inspiration of the series. Most of his work of the last decade is based upon things observed in the streets and photographed for future reference (the blinds, elevators, smashed windows, etc). This process has led to paintings that are readable both as abstract or constructivist and as being figurative without having a full narrative.

Escalator, the acrylic on aluminium diptychs (39 x 78 cm) present escalator steps on a 1:1 scale. They transport us up and down floors, catch our grime but the ridges are polished by the soles of our shoes unevenly as we have a tendency to walk or stand on different parts of each step. The paintings may be read figuratively, but are made in a way usually associated with abstraction. An underpainting of light falling on stainless steel is covered with thick acrylic paint and then scraped off using a customized, toothed putty knife in a motion that reminds of silkscreen printing. At *Kabinett* they are presented at a 90° angle, thus picking up the gallery's revolving walls. Reminiscent of the larger office blind paintings of the late 2000s, Mårtensson plays with the surface, edge of the support and our visual interpretations of reality.

The *Shadowplayer* series is based on a painted white oval on velvety black rectangular linen canvas. Inspired by street lights seen during his walks home on windy nights, the angles differ and might remind us of eyes from a cartoon. These hard edge paintings are joyful and bright because of the stark contrast and reminiscence of movement. The starkness of the light is clear in the north's darkness, but rendered softer due to the shape and single yet slanted motif.

While traveling in the Tokyo subway, Mårtensson noticed tiles reflecting each other. The *Adapter* series presents the reflection of a tile as smoothly painted compared to the more thickly painted lines between tiles. Presenting the language of the original and its cover with differently applied oil paint. Like the *Escalator* works mentioned above, there is a difference between the original manufactured product and how we see it, whether through naked eyes or those of a camera lens.

Per Mårtensson (1969) is a Swedish artist based in Malmö. In 2012 he completed a 20 x 114 meter outdoor mural commission for Emporia in Malmö. His works are in the collection of the Göteborgs Konstmuseum, Malmö Konstmuseum, Moderna Museet Stockholm, Region Skåne, Stockholms Konst, Colección Jumex, Mexico City, as well as private and corporate collections in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Mexico, Sweden, Norway, UK, USA, and Switzerland. In 2014 he received a 5-year working grant from the Swedish Arts Council and in 2017 the Eric and Inger Olson-stipendium.