

Galerie Francesca Pia

Press Release

June 2008

Thomas Bayrle a mustache is a man's best friend

May 31 - July 5, 2008

Opening: Saturday, May 31, 5 - 8 p.m.

The large-scale silk-screen print *Klo* (John, 1967) shows a “super john” made up of small johns. The large shape consists of a particular number of identical small johns – not one too many and not one too few.

Thomas Bayrle (born 1937, lives and works in Frankfurt) at the time created his large-scale prints on plastic (*Klo/ Tassenfrau/ Kuhmädchen/ Ente*) by using methods of production that were also employed in advertising and in the mass production of industrial consumer goods. A work was first carefully planned in terms of its subject and technical specifications and then produced in the most efficient and simplest possible way analogous to industrial accumulation processes. In view of car dumps, stockpiles of goods, vacation paradises and soccer stadiums, Bayrle, starting in 1964, developed his graphic art in the direction of accumulation: *TassenTassen Supertasse* (CupsCups Supercup). A graphic element was amassed or accumulated in such a way that it sort of “tipped over into a new quality” – just like when the mass of a particular product is exceeded a new quality results, a super mass, graphically a super sign. Bayrle only had a small-size screen printing frame at his disposal, and *Klo* for this reason was made out of nine equal size components (A1 plastic sheets). The parts were printed separately and then attached to one another to create the large-scale work. With only three screens (drawing plate/cover /color plate) and no less than 40 paper stencils he arrived at a result that in commercial silk-screen printing at the time was only possible at an incomparably higher cost.

Thomas Bayrle works with structures and patterns that underlie “the visible things” like an “energetic mattress” – that are constitutive of them, as he says. From 1956–58 he served an apprenticeship as a machine weaver, spending two years in front of weaving and other textile processing machines. During this time he must have come to the realization that, physically, fabrics are not simply surfaces, but rather minutely detailed three-dimensional reliefs, that is, millions of knots of threads that pass over or under one another. In the years that followed Bayrle expanded this notion of the connectedness of things and the world into compatible networks, grids, screens and fabrics (books, wallpaper designs, coats, prints, films etc.).

The subject of “mass” became a central concern for some artists in the 1960s in view of economic affluence and mass production in the West as well as in view of mass movements in communist countries such as China. As opposed to the general political view of the East vs. West dichotomy at the time, Bayrle emphasized the ornamental qualities of mass rallies in the East and stockpiles of mass-produced goods in the West. By looking at their visual similarities Bayrle smoothed out social contrasts, rather than getting lost in ideological ones.

Galerie Francesca Pia is showing a survey of Thomas Bayrle’s work of the past 40 years. In addition to prints, relief sculptures and wallpaper designs, the exhibition will include collages, paper meshes as well as a few suit design models (Clemens en August) with a shoe design from 1967.

Selected previous exhibitions:

Reykjavik Arts Festival 2008, Experiment Marathon Reykjavik, Reykjavik, 2008

Kunsthaus Zurich, Europop, Zurich, 2008

Biennale de Lyon, 2007

FRAC Limousin, Thomas Bayrle, Limoges, 2007

Museum für Moderne Kunst, Thomas Bayrle: 40 Jahre Chinese Rock’n’Roll, Frankfurt/Main, 2006

Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Thomas Bayrle, Frankfurt/Main, 2002

Koriyama City Art Museum, Koriyama, 1997

Academy of Art & Design, Beijing, 1997

Portikus, Autobahnkopf, Frankfurt/Main, 1990

Galerie Francesca Pia, Limmatstrasse 275, 8005 Zurich, www.francescapia.com

Art Basel 39, June 4 - 8, 2008, Hall 2.1, Booth V2

Jutta Koether, opening August 29, 2008, 6 - 8 p.m., followed by a summer party in the courtyard of Löwenbräu Areal