



KANG CONTEMPORARY

Serendipity: Art (mostly) on Paper

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On January 28, 1754, Sir Horace Walpole wrote to Horace Mann about a momentous discovery. While exploring his library, he stumbled upon a coat of arms matching one from a friend in Florence. Filled with excitement, he coined the term Serendipity in his letter, inspired by a tale he read as child: The Three Princes of Serendip. It probably originates from the Indian-Persian poet Amir Chusro and has been received in Europe since the early modern period. This tale illustrates how keen observation can lead to unexpected discoveries, a lesson Walpole found profoundly resonant.

If science can be described as a system that provokes significant coincidences, serendipity is the mode of scientific, technical and artistic discoveries par excellence - from the positive effect of penicillin on humans to nylon stockings to decalomania. The concept of serendipity thus serves as an approach of a creativity that proceeds in a roundabout way. It is precisely the form of open-ended creating that makes complex constructions of meaning based on random impulses possible in the creative process in the sense of a theory of inverse expediency. Especially during digitalization, where the casual snatching of events and facts is gaining in importance, an investigation of serendipitous practices from an artistic perspective is particularly interesting regarding their epistemic qualities.

The group exhibition Serendipity - Art on Paper is dedicated to the conditions of emergence and testimonies of serendipity and concentrates primarily on the medium paper. Based on six different perspectives, the exhibition examines artistic ways of dealing with the material paper against a common production-aesthetic background. In the meantime, the serendipitous practice proves to be an individual variable of translation, whose spectrum of possible applications is exemplified in the exhibition by techniques such as drawing, printmaking, collage, or paper sculpture. Paper, with its highly plastic appearance, promises to be a great material for serendipitous excursions.

While the medium of paper in its strict definition undoubtedly represents a body, it is nevertheless flat, so that its two-dimensional character initially predominates. And yet its flatness can also give rise to figural structures that radiate fragility and corporeal solidity in equal measure. The paper pulp itself, whether made of cellulose or papier-mâché, presents itself as malleable and impresses in equal measure with its lightness and stability. Centuries of eastern and western history merge in it, whereby the significance of the white gold oscillates between industrial mass-produced goods and artisanal preciousness until it rapidly gains importance for artistic production in Europe during Cubist and Dadaist avant-gardism and finally in the manifesto of the Düsseldorf artists' group ZERO in 1963. This is due in part to the fact that paper's material qualities and organic texture open it up to an imposing range of artistic-technical processing variants. In Serendipity: Art on Paper the high plasticity of the medium corresponds in a special way with the artistic varieties of serendipity. We invite you to actively participate in the creation of new situations and narratives within the artworks.



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The colored drawings by Katrin von Lehmann are partially overlaid with perforated sheets. While the automated line management reveals the artistic recourse to scientifically exact methods, their permanence is contrastingly broken by the fragile perforation.

Frank Coldewey's paper-based architectural structures secure their seemingly improvised state in an extremely fragile manner. Exposed to gravity, they are the more unprotected, but at the same time gain a kind of material stubbornness.

Vemo Hang synthesizes knowledge and sensuality in her sculptural paintings, in which she physically spatializes and sculpturally embodies virtuality. In her works, thoughts are carried by an atmosphere that creates clues for a mental-spatial search movement.

Lisa Glauer's analog lino prints explore how hegemonic structures shape existences on the physical and mental planes. Her engagement with disciplinary and political borderlands, meanwhile, is informed by scholarly research.

Masch's drawings are not influenced by modern art movements but emerge from the free design of the surface. In them, an idiosyncratic expression encourages rambling exploration.

Tatjana Schülke's structures and collages are based on regulative, structuring and space-filling ideas. Marked by lightness, by a certain fragility they are simply present and want to be looked at, wondered at, understood intuitively in the sense of a haptic experience.

TEXT: Lukas Treiber