

JOHANNES WOHNSEIFER

JOHANN KONIG - BERLIN

In his most recent 2010 exhibition at Johann König, Johannes Wohnseifer presents an installation that weaves together his typical layering of references, pop RAL palette and war page of established correspondences between aesthetics and meaning—yet with an impact that is uncustomarily cerebral. At the core of the exhibition is Africa as the subject of the colonialist eye. At the center of the space are a grouping of low, shelf-like objects: each an individual rearrangement of the components that make up Rietveld's famous Berlin chair (1923) and each bearing the names of one of the streets of Berlin's African neighborhood. While the Rietveld chair has appeared before in Wohnseifer's work as a do-it-yourself assembly kit to be performed under the influence of magic mushrooms (*Psilocybin Experience*, 1997), here the playfulness of its recombinations paired with the hegemonic gesture of naming is what starts to take on hallucinogenic dimensions.

On two walls are aluminum sculptures reminiscent of metal roller blinds that hold off the sun and a view to within. Although their bright, glossy colors sug-

gest the clear combinations of national flags, the title, "Shutter Stutter" point to a breakdown in communication. On the opposite walls the series of documentary photographs of various books on Africa (titled "Canon"), however, give the installation a certain heavy-handedness that is usually absent in Wohnseifer's agile sideswipes at German power politics and street culture muscle. True, they play into our stereotypical notions of the continent: safari, shamanistic ritual, the ivory trade. However, the largely black-and-white images seem to raise a wagging finger at the uncritical subsumption of the exotic through the modernist aesthetic or the aestheticizing impulse itself. (Is this why contemporary photographer Saskia Sassen's photographs are included in this selection?) The images seem to call for a closer more faceted read, but do they take us beyond the endless combination of the make-shift notion of a distant place we piece together in the process?

Laura Schleussner

JOHANNES WOHNSEIFER, Shutter-Stutter Painting#5 (RAL 2004,8025,6019,4003,1015) 2009. Aluminum, powder coated lacquer, stainless steel screws, 145 x 100 x 10cm. Courtesy Johann König, Berlin.

