

Tillman Kaiser

GALERIE EMANUEL LAYR

An der Hülben 2

January 25–March 9

Over the past year, the content of Tillman Kaiser's paintings—abstract patterns coupled with graphic elements—has changed only in the details, yet the shapes of the works themselves have evolved from traditional rectangular and square canvases to complex, fractal-looking geometries. In his current exhibition, "*Hermetische Melancholie II*" (Hermetic Melancholy II), Kaiser continues his exploration of this process of kaleidoscopic expansion, but he has also forced the contents back onto smaller canvases, while pushing the rectilinear forms of the older canvases out into the gallery space with sculptures and a found object.

In the painting *Kolbenhub* (Piston Stroke), 2012, jagged blades outline an inwardly funneling oval shape with circles of white, blue, and red egg tempera. The combination of painterly aspects and hypnotic swirling imagery pulls the viewer in, raising questions about how the work was made and what the mysterious depiction is. Upon closer inspection, one discovers that the black-and-white elements are silver gelatin prints on paper that have been collaged to the canvas, often in the center, acting as an organic core to the nonrealistic canvas forms. *Sweet Chariot*, 2012, contains a similar pictorial motif, where the unidentifiability of a Xeroxed-looking image pulls the viewer closer, inviting efforts to decode the painting's composition. Throughout this exhibition, one finds a blend of the formal, angular dynamism of Futurism with Kaiser's ongoing reverence for artistic handwork, as evident in the roughly framed pieces and less than perfectly glued sculptures. This mixture can also be discerned in *Die Diagnose* (The Diagnosis), 2013, where six found, wooden cinema seat backs have been placed in two conjoined columns of three, extending outward from the gallery wall, almost as a natural analogue to the paintings.



View of "*Hermetische Melancholie II*" (Hermetic Melancholy II), 2013.

— Aaron Bogart