

## MUTTER & GENTH – Trusted surfaces 25 November 2017 – 3 February 2018

In this exhibition, designed as an installation, Heike Mutter and Ulrich Genth explore technically produced surfaces and system components (building facades, car headlights, kitchen surfaces) and their cultural and psychological anchoring in our perception. A lab-like arrangement brings together different sculptural objects that borrow procedures, technologies, and forms from design and architecture. In an open, semantic context, connotations such as security, representation, power and status are put into question. Familiar or supposedly trusted surfaces are deconstructed.

A hybrid between frame-like structure and sculpture, which at first glance seems to be made of solid sandstone, hangs from a structure of handrails used in public transport. When looking at the back, it turns out to be a hollow body of stone veneer. Stone veneer is an ornamental material that radiates the optical quality and solidity of stone both on facades and indoors, but which in fact consists of a synthetic resin fibre composite with a wafer-thin layer of rock. A layer of synthetic resin is applied to stone blocks and stripped off again with the uppermost layer of rock. In various materials such as slate and sandstone, the exhibition objects decline this form of insubstantial representation.

The five standard, glossy white kitchen fronts mounted on the long wall of the gallery indicate an invisible feature. Installed on a hinge, they can be brought into a vertical or a horizontal position. The surfaces are sealed by a nano coating, which only becomes obvious when exposed to water. Thus, their visibility depends on the performative act of moistening, which is repeated regularly.

Two car headlamps mounted on a bar chase visitors in the gallery like the eyes of a reptile. High-tech headlights like these have built-in electromechanics that control their lenses and manoeuvre the spotlights around bends. The artists have bridged the system, normally constructed for safety purposes, with a new processor that allows the curvelight mechanics to react to the movements of the visitors in the room. The aggressive glare, reinforced by the extremely bright xenon light used predominantly in the luxury segment, turns the promise of security and luxury into a threatening scenario. Consequently, hedonistic strategies from advertising, which are supposed to promote the bond between man and automobile, have the opposite effect.

Heike Mutter and Ulrich Genth have been carrying out site- and context-specific projects in the public space since 2003, with a focus on participatory elements. The results and experience gained from intensive research for their artistic interventions are reflected in their exhibitions in institutional spaces. Right now, their sculpture *Denkmal für die permanente Neuanfang* (“Monument to the permanent new beginning”) can be seen in Dresden, on the historically and politically explosive Neumarkt, dedicated to the grim upheavals that are stacked up in our collective as well as personal memory.

*Heike Mutter, born 1969, Munich, Germany.*

*Ulrich Genth, born 1971, Tübingen, Germany.*

*They live and work in Hamburg, Germany.*