skeip

Pronounced with an unusual sonority and written in a slightly exotic arrangement of letters, “skeip” appears as a lexical formation at the threshold of the dictionary, absent from explanatory dictionaries. The word operates latently, through abstraction: through pronunciation, mimicry, and verbal gesture, sound renders a familiar term recognisable, converting a string of letters into meaning and content. Carefully handled through phonetic action, “skeip” becomes the familiar English word “scape.”

For Norbert Filep, the choice of phonetic transcription over the source word reflects the logic of his artistic approach: abstraction. The movement back and forth between sound and vision overlays the real with the imaginary and the indeterminate, or, rather, with that which remains open to multiple readings. Etymologically, “scape” unfolds across several levels (technical, literary, botanical) connecting indirectly with the four directions outlined in the present exhibition.

The first direction begins with the process of abstraction, which turns the significance of linguistic particles into elongated, overlapping visual structures through obsessive repetition. Here, linear writing falls prey to its own generative act, and information flows in reverse, from the concrete to the abstract. The alteration of the symbols of the alphabet and the abacus (the Particles of Meaning series), or of the logic of a descriptive text by the artist Martha Rosler (Study for a Martha Rosler text), rewrites textual information as chains of visual echoes. Reading is thus suspended and inverted, while the text’s initial meaning is preserved within a palimpsest saturated with information.

In the second direction, Filep transforms the information contained in architectural and technical-drawing templates into prototypes of visual reconversion. His painting practice works in a manner similar to drawing at the level of process: repetitive formations turn the surface of the canvas into informational landscapes, “landskeips” drawn from personal experience, travel, or everyday moments of optical wandering.

The third direction is marked by maquette-objects, which punctuate the volumetric space of the exhibition. Conceived as variations for future habitable spaces, they arise from a profound restructuring both of the set of instruments the artist uses in his practice (rulers, set squares, protractors, technical-drawing templates, and so on) and of the conceptual field closely bound to them. For Filep, identifying a poetics of measurement, and its relation to the world discovered or constructed through these tools, becomes a subject of inquiry, particularly in the present context of hyperdigitalisation, which marginalises their use.

The Black Drawings series forms the fourth direction. It examines the antinomic relation between figuration and abstraction and asks to what extent the two can coexist on the same plane. Their superimposition automatically heightens the tension of the visual field, where photography, translated through academic modes of drawing, enters into dialogue with layers of horizontal and vertical lines characteristic of a Cartesian, conceptual way of thinking.

Skeip puts these four perspectives in relation within a single exhibition dialogue, articulated through the shifting language of abstract discourse. At its core are processes of information overload through repetition, mixture, and superimposition, offered as an escape from the informational turbulence of everyday life.