ALMINE RECH

Peter Halley
Conduits: Paintings from the 1980s

Mar 31 — Oct 15, 2023 | Mudam, Luxembourg

Bringing together a selection of thirty significant works from both public and private collections, this retrospective exhibition showcases paintings alongside previously unseen drawings, sketches, and notes from the initial decade of Peter Halley's career.

During the 1980s, Peter Halley developed a distinctive visual language that he has continued to employ in his artistic practice for over four decades. By reappropriating the elements of geometric abstraction, he constructed a pictorial system consisting of "prisons," "cells," and "conduits," allowing him to create diagrammatic paintings that represented social themes. Through these works, he explored the consequences and enduring effects of urbanization and industrialization in a post-industrial society profoundly shaped by technological advancements. Working at the emergence of the internet and during a time when personal computers and video games became widely adopted, he depicted the physical and bureaucratic environments of the late twentieth century, capturing the systemic logic that manifested within the architectures of the nascent digital realm.

I wanted to draw attention to this geometricised, rationalised, quantified world. I saw it as a world characterised by efficiency, by regimentation of movement, bureaucracies, whether in the corporation, government, or university. It is a world also characterised by the commodification and quantification of all aspects of human activity – where one can put a number or a dollar sign on any human activity ... [Geometry is] the language of [the] managerial-professional class. It is the language of the corporation and flow charts; it is the language of urban planning and of communications.

Peter Halley. Conduits: Paintings from the 1980s marks the first comprehensive museum survey of Peter Halley's artwork from the 1980s in over three decades. By drawing extensively from Halley's critical writings, interviews, and unpublished notes, the exhibition aims to reassess this early body of work and its exploration of themes such as alienation, isolation, confinement, and connectivity within the context of its creation. It provides a retrospective look at both the artistic and critical landscape of New York City during the 1980s, a period marked by economic expansion and collapse, nuclear threat, and the AIDS epidemic.

The exhibition and its accompanying publication have been developed in close collaboration with the artist. It features artworks from notable collections including the Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover; the Broad Art Foundation, Los Angeles; the CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Rennie Collection, Vancouver; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and the Mudam Collection.

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