

Noori Lee

Liquid Realities

The wooden terrace of the modernist house in *Void* looms up sharply in space, feigning a perspectival construction that in fact only a photograph can bring forth. For the white villa with the dynamically curved roof in *Borderline*, 2003, and its projecting constructivist ramp, the roof even seems to have been predetermined by the photographic shot. The house was built for the picture, spectacularly oriented solely towards the one-angle view.

Architecture and chic interiors from *Schöner Wohnen* and *Wallpaper* constitute the starting point for Noori Lee's painted inventions. The coveted interior and exterior space puts its best foot forward for this display of a potential habitat. But in fact the interior with its designer sofa and table is only a manifestation of itself, as sign. People are never visible, instead the representative oil painting on canvas or aluminum only stands for the place of representation, where perhaps once these very paintings could have hung. Not for nothing does Noori Lee entitle his series *Collector*, 2002. In the pictures empty suites and pleasant, warmly lit (but unoccupied) interiors can be seen or possibly a garish hall with slender iron sculptures that recall works by Bernar Venet. Noori Lee's uninhabited *Collector* series could itself fill this collector's room that needs to be imagined as a kind of *mise-en-abyme*, as an endlessly mirrored reflection. But here art has gone missing, that is if it weren't for the circular sculptures that speak of a different painterly quality of gestic squiggles. It is *peinture* that is literally the art here.

With its abstract force Noori Lee counters the figurative depictions of rooms and houses. The two levels of reality compete

and superimpose on one another or interact, that is, the pictorial interference seems to be linked to dreamlike scenarios. The psychedelic color streaks and blurriness in *Borderline* make the fashionable house into a site of the uncanny, a film set for a traumatic episode. The aesthetic work of translating the photographic model into painting itself releases an unimagined potential for repression. However, which eyes we use to regard the scene remains unresolved. Hitchcock's subjective camera was the first in the history of film to attempt to make hallucinatory shifts in perception portrayable. At the same time it also demonstrated that, for instance, intoxication and vertigo do not take place in front of, but behind, the camera. As autonomous concretizations, Noori Lee's pictorial interferences have an influence on the figurative depiction and suggest unholy narratives, whereby the ensuing monstrosities are solely founded in the viewer's fantasy.

Furtive, 2003, is, on the other hand, hardly narrational at all. It is much more a case of painting reflecting on itself and, as *peinture*, freeing itself from figurative depiction. Blue warps, gestic loops and rainbow-like color spectrums function as elements that seriously threaten the illusionist reality of the solid glass house. The range from figuration to abstraction is in this way nullified as a binary model to depict and explain the world, whereby the painted reality has turned liquid and can ooze away at any moment.

Philipp Kaiser

From the German by Jeanne Haunschild