

Stiege 13

Edgar Lessig

I thought I wanted to be there, but I wasn't sure

15 October 2021 – 5 November 2021

Downstairs: *I thought I wanted to be there, but I wasn't sure (Poster), 2021*
toner, paper, 2 staples
29,7 x 42 cm
Edition of 35 (+3 AP)

Upstairs: *I thought I wanted to be there, but I wasn't sure (Chairs), 2021*
72 chairs, each individually marked
dimensions variable

I thought I wanted to be there, but I wasn't sure

Going there.

The personnel of Edgar Lessig's photographic work looks somewhat dishevelled. Five people on a sofa, side by side, but each for themselves. Five people who don't feel quite at ease, but can't get away either. Involuntarily, one has to think of the final dialogue of *Waiting for Godot*:

- Well, shall we go.
- Yes, let's go.
- (They do not move).

Possibly.

At first glance, it looks like someone wanted to make room here. Blue chairs have been stacked regularly and moved to the walls. But still, they dominate the room. Clearly structured aggregates that invite to be taken apart again.

Edgar Lessig's installation is as minimalist as it is concrete: the room seems like a found situation, the space-saving chairs like readymades. Yet each of the 72 molded shells is imprinted with a number; the specimen becomes unique, the industrial chair an edition.

Hardly any piece of furniture is as anthropomorphic as the chair: legs, seat, backrest address the individual human body. The stackable chair, however, calls for the collective. The chairs seem to be waiting for their next use. The view oscillates between a formalistic observation and the playing out of possible constellations; the pleasure of fitting shells and frames and the imagination of different social situations. Plastic blue or longing blue, Yves Klein or Blue Flower, working group or silence, adaptation or participation?

In 1965 Joseph Kosuth created an icon of conceptual art with "One and Three Chairs". Term, image, and object stand side by side: chair, photograph, encyclopedia entry. Edgar Lessig's installation shares the love for the conceptual with Kosuth and Yves Klein. In 1958 the latter opened an exhibition titled *Le Vide* at the Iris Clert Gallery in Paris. 3000 visitors accepted the invitation in search of a "sensibilité picturale immatérielle"; in the gallery space they found only white walls lit by neon lights.

Stiege 13 too appears to have been emptied out. Neon light, white walls, gray floor. But the longer nothing happens, the more the chairs come into consciousness. If there is such a thing as active waiting, then it probably has this very color.

- Jasmin Mersmann