

Art Review:

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REVIEWS [DIETMAR LUTZ & KOTA EZAWA](#)



DIETMAR LUTZ & KOTA EZAWA: DOCUMENTA

ARQUEBUSE, GENEVA
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Go through the door of Arquebuse gallery and you enter a succession of images within images, of spaces within spaces, an endless regress or *mise en abyme* painting, photography, collage and projection. Kota Ezawa's various backlit, digitally edited images and Dietmar Lutz's big paintings are installed in a sequence that moves through the two levels of the gallery, leading the visitor finally into the basement, illuminated by the light of a projector projecting an image of a projector projecting

an image. Avoiding flashy gimmicks or special effects, the physical space of the gallery seems nevertheless to merge into the space of representation, each work doubling and echoing, without ever repeating, the content of neighbouring works.

This is an exhibition based on an exchange between two friends. Living in San Francisco and Düsseldorf respectively, Ezawa and Lutz brainstormed and exchanged a range of images via the web. Lutz's work is often inspired by snapshots taken in his day-to-day life, and the paintings produced for Arquebuse draw, with no particular order, from photographs taken by one or the other of them. All, however, share an attention to the institutional spaces of the artworld, depicting and questioning art's mediation in the exhibition space, the newspaper or the art magazine. The recursive, infinite regress of these images of spaces containing images of spaces emerges as the show's subtle politics, suggesting a world of artists producing art about their experience of the artworld. So the images are often memories of recent exhibitions, like Ezawa's own show at MoMA in New York, or of historical ones, such as Alfred Stieglitz's Photo-Secession gallery. If the memory of some exhibitions is here reactivated in different works, one begins to imagine that snapshots taken of the show here in Geneva might end up as the subject of more works by Ezawa and Lutz – and who knows, might spark a new collaboration like this one... in another five years. The next *Documenta*?

Ezawa and Lutz's collaboration turns on the multivalent notion of representation. What can one say about a painting made from the photograph of an exhibition, in which one finds the representation of an image presented on a television screen? Made of images within images, these works illustrate a traditional given of all representation, a question unchanged since the Renaissance – the construction of the illusion of three-dimensional space on a flat surface, and yet a window supposedly opening onto the world. Opening onto nothing but the artworld, the images in *Documenta* also present two differing technical approaches: Ezawa's flat lightbox images, as paper cutouts or c-type prints, and Lutz's giant acrylic canvases, which, while providing differing accounts of representation, flatness, opacity and transparency, transform these formal questions into metaphorical ones. Caught in the middle of this visual dialogue over the possible variations of such a tautologous proposition, we become vividly aware of the institutional spaces that, for all the time we spend in them, we are normally blind to. *Karine Tissot*