

REVIEWS MAR. 17, 2015

Andreas Schulze

NEW YORK,
at Team

by **Antonia Pocock**

Andreas
Schulze: *Untitled*
(E.F.G. 4711), 2014,
acrylic on nettle
cloth, 90 1/2 by 71
inches; at Team.



The automobile has a central place in the history of modern art, serving to symbolize both the efficiency of industrial production and the spectacle of mass consumption. Many histories of avant-garde aesthetics are laced with tales of artists finding inspiration in their cars, from Filippo Marinetti's revelation after a crash to Tony Smith's epiphany on the New Jersey Turnpike. However, it was the Pop artists who most thoroughly explored the car as an icon in their work, probing its double nature as seductive and dangerous.

Andreas Schulze refers to this history in his latest series of large-scale paintings of cars (all 2014 except one from the 1998 series "Autos"). Shifting between sleek, Futurist graphics and bulging, cartoonish shapes, Schulze's automobiles are variously monstrous and playful. Schulze emerged from the Cologne art scene of the 1980s, exhibiting at Monika Sprüth Gallery alongside Rosemarie Trockel and "Neue Wilde" painters such as Walter Dahn and Jiri Georg Dokoupil. Like his peers, Schulze has a hearty appetite for both past artistic styles and recent pop-culture visuals, always mixing imagery from disparate sources.

Reminiscent of the streamlined forms of Art Deco and Bauhaus design, Schulze's visionary vehicles at first seem to revive the cult of the machine. *Untitled* (E.F.G. 4711) depicts a car abstracted into jagged, angular facets, while *Untitled* (Car Service Station) quotes Charles Sheeler's Precisionist smokestacks and Fernand Léger's cylindrical forms. Yet Schulze undermines this technophilic style with an equally strong penchant for the biomorphic. Some of the automobiles, notably *Untitled* (Pinkster Parisienne) and *Untitled* (New Jersey Sheep), appear soft and amoebalike, suggesting sluggishness rather than speed.

None of Schulze's cars seem up to the quality standards associated with industrial assembly lines. Instead, these vehicles have been customized, each with a singular identity. For example, *Untitled* (Charlie Browner) features a pinstriped roadster with an exhaust cloud hovering above, reminiscent of the eponymous cartoon character's personal rain cloud. Rather than a Taylorist paradigm of rationality, Schulze followed a Kustom Kulture model of difference and rebellion. The Day-Glo palette and airbrushed finish of each painting strengthen the association with hot rods.

The artist is known for staging his paintings within immersive installations that incorporate sculptural objects, often recalling domestic settings. This exhibition accomplished such an effect more subtly. Each canvas in the show depicted a single car set against a generic landscape of rolling hills, fluffy clouds and blue sky that was consistent from one work to the next. The source of the exhaust in *Untitled* (Charlie Browner) appeared to have been the vehicle in the adjacent canvas, *Untitled* (N.Y. Householder), which added to the illusion that the space within each painting extended beyond the frame. The works on view were hung close together and low enough on the walls that the rough gray road at the bottom of each painting seemed to flow seamlessly into the gallery's glazed concrete floors. Perceived as a continuous scene, the grouping of paintings became the "Traffic Jam" of the show's title.

The sheer variety and absurdity of Schulze's stalled procession of vehicles immediately called to mind Jean-Luc Godard's infamous nine-minute tracking shot of bumper-to-bumper traffic in *Weekend* (1967). The opposite of efficiency, traffic signifies congestion, stagnation, wasted time and frustration. Like Godard, Schulze staged his vehicular gridlock to uncover the irrational underside of modernism.