

Falling to earth

by Kate Squires

Behind the gallery window, Silke Eva Kästner creates a painting in space. From the street you see a large, green rectangular painting whose left side is slanting down, as if falling through the floor. To the right of it, draped over the wall (which is the rectangular green painting's support), a small reddish-pink, painted paper is loosely draped over the wall, like a resting bird that might take flight at any moment. From the perspective outside the window this scene is cut into two. It has an enclosing edge from the window's frame. It's a spacially disorientating scene. You need to move around to see how the different elements come to interact with each other. The wall that the green painting is on seems to stop and change at the crucial point where the window's framing edge cuts this scene in half adding to the uncanny situation. The green painting is falling towards the floor (towards the earth). There is a light brown band on the right edge of the painting.

On the left side of the painting is a similar band but of much lighter yellow. These bands at the edge of the frame add to the directionality and to the optical illusion in space. The right side of the painting -with the light brown band - and, with help from the reddish-pink, bring the right side to the foreground, pushing it closer to the street. At the other end of the painting the lighter yellow and the directionality push the painting down and away- back into the gallery space. The space between the window and the green's wall support then becomes one of the shapes in the space painting, altered. Neatly, walking through this corridor of colour, this space serves to open another space in which the visitor is confronted with another Kästner colour work, this time a print in which another colour and shape play is taking place. The reddish-pink, bird-like, fluttering paper is our anchor. It's the cloud in the left bottom corner of Heister's drawing. It re-orientates us upright and stops us falling through the floor. It's a temporary anchor though, so we don't have long before all of the elements start re-arranging

themselves around us. Inside, the green colour has movement in it, like a curtain or a wall of water, it bellows into the space. But this illusion stops at the edges, contained by the yellow and light brown edges. This means that the colour also holds as a shape. A shape in space. Kästner then, uses shape, space and colour to make her paintings. Free of the literal support of the canvas, she is making her compositions in space, with space.

Forms move through this artist's work. Shapes collide or cross or cut through space. These journeys in space can create shared moments in which there is a fleeting, tangible grasp on life, before moving away from each other and getting lost again.