

Florian Pumhösl

Modernologie / Modernology

2007

Installation

Museum Fridericianum

To contemplate the "migration of form" in Florian Pumhösl's work, is to contemplate what is retained in the recognisability of the familiar within the strange. What he uncovers are those elements of raw material that remain unchanged – in the transfer of formal motifs from one culture to another, as well as one medium to another, particularly when that material makes universalistic claims, as in the abstract formal language of modernism. The subject of this work is reciprocal exchange between the German, Russian and Japanese avant-gardes between the wars. The structure of the space refers to the artist-designer Murayama Tomoyoshi's *Triangular Studio* (1926) as well as to the black walls of the "Der Sturm" exhibition in Tokyo in 1914. This structure, which not only thematises cultural transference but carries out another such transfer itself, mediates between additional exhibits, which in turn mediate between graphic, painterly and architectonic motifs from Japan, with their constructivist, futurist and Dadaist models, and change them into something else. The vehicle for this operation is stained glass, a special variety of abstract image that emphasises its medium. As in the case of the structure of the space, what is exhibited here is the medium of mediation or translation itself. What may be experienced in this way is less the act of translation between the cultures than culture itself as translation. In this sense, too, part of the title, "Modernology" (citing the architect Kon Wajiro), gives a precise description of the project. It opposes both the conservative notion of self-contained cultures as well as the neoliberal goal, currently becoming reality, of a single world culture.

*Juliane Rebentisch*