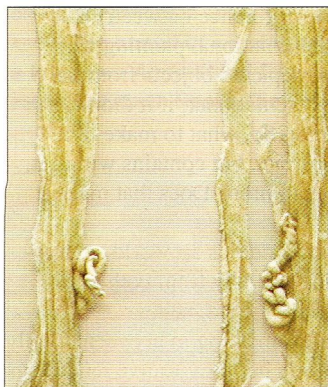


"Life Enigma." Anselm Reyle's 2005 installation at Galerie Giti Nourbakhsh, featured hanging neon chromed abstract sculptures, and paintings that reflect of reflective Mylar. ABOVE Kai Althoff's 'Scene in room with bed', 2001. An abstract work by Althoff made from wool and cotton.



Polke, and the late Martin Kippenberger. Richter famously works in both abstract and representational idioms; Polke (who pioneered the use of found fabrics as a canvas) opts for an even wider range of styles and subjects; and Kippenberger's activities (which included opening an office, managing a nightclub,

and playing in a rock band) represented "an affront to cherished notions of authorship," Darling notes.

Some see nothing new about the business of crossing stylistic and disciplinary boundaries to dabble in other media and voices. "You had Marcel Duchamp making readymades and painting," says Nicholas Baume, chief curator at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art. "It's an important tradition within the history of modern and contemporary art." What is new, however, is perhaps a rebellion against the overload and superficiality of our everyday world: "Althoff's work, in particular, is very low-tech, handmade, and personal," Baume says. "It's a counterpoint to the speed and slickness of digital culture."

All of these artists, in one way or another, make painting a central process in their work. But it is not the only process. "It is activated and prodded one way or another," says Darling, "by other things going on in the artist's mind."

Ann Landi is a contributing editor of ARTnews.