

## **BURJ FLAVIN-TATLIN**

### **Series In The Night**

### **Dubai 2006**

The abstracting gaze reduces all contentual references which are represented by the unfinished Burj Tower and which will be represented upon its completion. Every social, economic, and cultural aspect of a tower like this, in the sense of a social representation, is erased. As a consequence, the work moves away from every type of social-representational level of meaning and turns towards an iconographic, art-historical viewpoint. In the title of her piece, artist Susanne Schuricht makes iconographic hints at the artistic tradition within which she places her work. She cites the American minimalist artist Dan Flavin and his piece “‘Monument’ for V. Tatlin” of 1966-9. Flavin dedicated this work to the Russian constructivist Vladimir Tatlin. The artist would consider her work correctly interpreted if the viewer takes into consideration American minimal art and Russian constructivism. In referring to Tatlin, the artist explains to the viewer the tower under construction. She uses the reference to Tatlin to graphically illustrate architecture as hybrid, as machine and as biological structure. The trail laid by the artist, leading Tatlin via Flavin, does not only convey the meaning of the work shown here, it also communicates the true sensory impression of the actual tower.

Thus, classical abstraction and the art-historical reference is used to communicate the intense sensory impression of the tower: this is done more effectively than could have achieved by means of a documentation employing traditional architectural photography. This intense holistic sensory impression describes something that can be conveyed in its true extraordinariness via classical abstraction. The reference to Flavin’s work makes it clear that this sensory impression plays a role as the ‘moment of the sublime’, as well as the autonomy of art “as abstraction of”, in contrast to classical ‘photo realism’. Jean-Francois Lyotard spoke out for the autonomy of art when he said: “War on totality, let us attest to the unrepresentable, let us activate the differends and save the honour of the name.” [1] Precisely these differences, precisely this unrepresentable is represented in this work and its title.

[1] J.F. Lyotard, ‘Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist postmodern?’ in Peter Engelmann, ‘Postmoderne und Dekonstruktion: Texte französischer Philosophen der Gegenwart’. Reclam, Stuttgart 2004, p. 48.