

## INSIGHT #1 – *Indoor Outdoor (1–4)* von Richard Tuttle



Richard Tuttle, *Indoor Outdoor (1-4)*, 29.8 x 84 cm, acrylic on paper, photo: Annemarie Verna Gallery, Zurich

***Indoor Outdoor*** from 2012 is a hybrid work on paper. Neither the term painting nor drawing seems to fit. Using his brush, Richard Tuttle placed one or two small color events in acrylic on each of the four sheets. The application of color and surface treatment are of a painterly quality, while the isolated figures have something drawn about them and the last sheet even features a small collage of paint and adhesive strips. The round holes from the spiral binding are all severed from being torn off, but otherwise intact. The four sheets of paper, each measuring 29.5 x 21 cm, are arranged contiguously in perfect alignment on a black cardboard panel, held by a black frame. This gives *Indoor Outdoor* a rigor that is otherwise rather unusual for Richard Tuttle. A slight amount of play in the paper reveals narrow gaps between the sheets. The visible black of the cardboard below takes on the appearance of fine cuts tapering towards the top and bottom. The white paper surface is thus divided into visible segments, reinforcing the autonomy of the four sheets.

This formation of an ensemble between work unit and individual part is a central and compelling aspect of Tuttle's oeuvre – an oeuvre that is mostly composed of work groups, series and multi-part works.

With *Indoor Outdoor*, the multipartite nature of such works can be understood as a visual sequence – a sequence, however, which leaves the direction, pace and rhythm of viewing open, allowing the various elements to attract the eye. For example, the reddish elements on sheets two and three form a striking focal point. They create a strong chromatic accent and tend to transition from abstraction into the representational. They are reminiscent of a cloud, crescent moon and star, suggesting associations with outdoor. This dialectic between abstract form and figurative object is decisive for Tuttle's vocabulary and results in the fact that his glyphs<sup>1</sup> always simultaneously function as enigmatic allusions.

**„If you create the space between appearance and reality,  
you can do anything.“<sup>2</sup>**

The same applies to the double figure in light and dark brown on the first sheet. The two curved brushstrokes facing each other here seem to embody the duality of the title. Finally, the collage on the last sheet is also a visual invitation. More three-dimensional than the other elements, its physical constitution is not immediately apparent. Richard Tuttle placed a torn piece of adhesive tape on a layer of gray paint. On top of this he applied two more layers of paint, first a light blue, then a pink circle cut at the bottom. He then worked this pinkish red area with a pointed object, scraping off paint and pressing minute holes into the collage. Tuttle's works often feature such damaged surfaces or crumpled and glued paper. Paint and paper thus become a haptic working material. The artist also makes frequent use of adhesive tape. This is everyday material that is not intended to last for eternity, imbuing the montages with the appearance of fragile crafted structures.

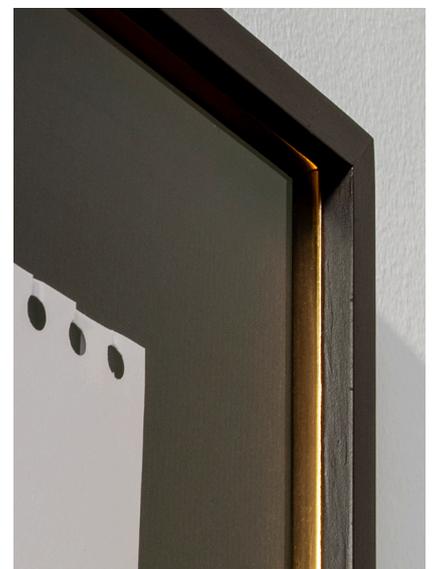
In reference to the title *Indoor Outdoor*, the motifs are reminiscent of nature, stars, atmospheric moods or the four elements, i.e. the outdoor realm.

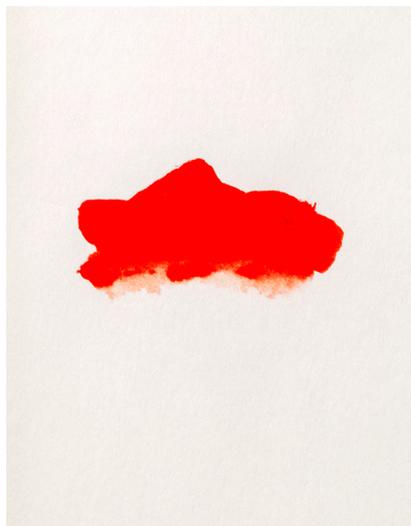
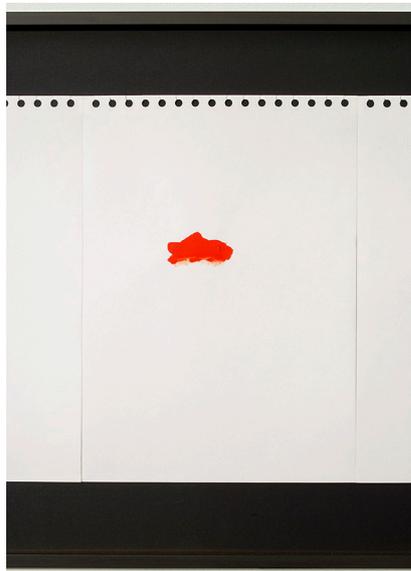
The interior, on the other hand – indoor – is more difficult to perceive. But taking a closer look at the framing, it becomes clear that the interplay between indoor and outdoor is fundamental to Richard Tuttle's drawings. When viewing *Indoor Outdoor* from the front, the frame cannot be clearly made out, as the synchronization of the rear panel in black and the frame in the same color neutralizes the multi layered nature of the drawing, glazing and framing. Only when the work is viewed from the side does a gold-plated inner frame strip become visible as a reflective strip between the rear panel and the glass. The gold is not directed outwards – as in the black chamfered frames from the 19th century with their gilded inner beading – but is kept behind the glass and drawn into the space of the work itself. As a consequence, the light reflected by the gold also radiates inwards. The gold inner strip is the same width as the black outer strip, resulting in a spatial doubling in which the glass acts as a membrane between inside and outside.

By the time of the *Framed Drawings* in the 1980s, framing had become an integrally established part of a drawing for Richard Tuttle. Individual sheets and groups of works are framed with painstakingly elaborated, painted or gilded frames. At times, as objects in and of themselves, they protrude far beyond the drawing. This creates an intensive interplay between work, framing and wall. In such cases, the frame plays the role of mediator, located at the point of transition from work to wall or from the illusion of drawing to spatial reality. This evokes the tradition of painted artist's frames from the 19th century as well as reflections on the relationship between work and wall in American art of the 1960s and 1970s.

*Indoor Outdoor* demonstrates Tuttle's virtuosic treatment of the drawing as a physical body. The drawing on the sheet of paper, the combination of the sheets and the joining of sheet, background, glass, frame and wall provide various means of creating sequences, rhythms and spatial relationships. The individual units are combined into ensembles in which the individual parts remain visible as such and relate to one other.

(Text: Laura Mahlstein, PhD; Translation: Julia Thorson)





- 1) Richard Tuttle often refers to his symbolic forms as glyphs. Originally used for an incised or sculptural representation, today the term mainly refers to the graphic depiction of a character within a particular typeface. Siegel Katy: "As Far as Language goes", in: *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art 2005, pp. 334-345, 335.
- 2) Richard Tuttle in conversation with Tara McDowell in: McDowell Tara: "Framed Drawings", in: *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, San Francisco, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art 2005, pp. 227-231, 227.