

KONJUNKTIONEN

The exhibition 'Konjunktionen' brings together recent works by five artists who are in the process of gaining wider recognition for their art.

Grouping these artists together in one show is in itself a "conjunction", a coming together of a variety of concepts, as well as artistic processes and materials. One of the major concerns, however, that unites these artists is the engagement with and treatment of space, whether it is present in architectural/urban, organic/natural or psychological/mythological form.

Ross Walker's oil paintings are meticulous in finish and almost monochrome in colour range. He employs subtle muted tones, hues of green and blue ranging towards the neutral grey of the spectrum. As the expression 'grey is it's own compliment' states, Walker's abstracts correspondingly exist within themselves without instantly revealing what is at their core. A sense of depth, of three-dimensional space is achieved by means of geometrical shapes that are loosely interlocking yet somehow fail to connect. They command space on the canvas, giving it depth and definition, and at the same time remain aloof and indecipherable, like alien shapes which have somehow fallen into the realm of human contemplation; the impossible architecture of a future civilisation doomed to extinction by it's own failure to exist in the first place.

Maik Scheermann's drawings also engage with architectural spaces, however these are more directly represented and seen in constant tension with organic forms. Confronting us with a profound contradiction, there are the clean lines and hard angles of Bauhaus style urban buildings in juxtaposition with spaces which are reminiscent of interior/exterior courtyards, or garden rooms for relaxation and leisure. These familiar urban structures are defamiliarised and subtly undermined by organic growth forms spreading all over them in natural shapes resembling trees, moss, grass, leaves, stones and amorphous marbled patterns on granite slabs. These organic elements are 'arranged' in strictly ordered compositions similar to the lay-out of public parks or sculpted landscape gardens. Punctuated with series upon series of blank rectangles, like diagrammatic word bubbles, these drawings urge the viewer to conceptually 'fill in the blanks'. Not without irony, they beg the question of the actual function of art in 'the real world'.

Nicole Heinzl's combination of a minimal colour palette and a strong gestural strategy leads to maximum effect in her megalithic scale paintings. Her skilfully controlled method of applying paint to and then scraping it off the surface of the canvas, lays bare harsh primal landscapes which are at one and the same time realistic and highly abstract: Similar to photographic images that focus so closely on waterscenes, forests and elemental nature as to become non-representative, these paintings derive their impact from the interplay or conflict between abstraction and representation, however, they do not allow the viewer to feel at ease either way. Instead, through their compulsive method and choice of colour choice of colour, these images suggest the essential moment of flux; The waterscapes imply an impending storm, the trees in the forest; an impending gale. In this way, Heinzl captures the essential order within chaos and chaos within order; the perpetuum of stasis and flux.

Lia Vaz Saliero's sculptures seek to find physical forms for the artistic expression of the intangible, of memories of childhood and intensely personal feelings, experiences or perceptions and to give these a universality that will speak immediately to the viewer. Vaz Saliero does not 'present' her work, nor does it make any statement; rather, she shares silent, fleeting and intimate moments with us by capturing them in delicately made, ethereal objects and lays them at our feet, so to speak. Whatever different materials she might employ, wood, paper, wax or plastics, her work despite its simplicity and gracefulness conveys a multiplicity of meanings. If one were to apply the terminology of metamorphosis to Van Saliero's works they would be closest to the chrysalis. As sculptural presences they are highly evocative, filled with promise; with the hopes and fears of the transient lives we are bound to, of the humans we once were, and those we are yet to become.

Benjamin de Burca's collages are constructed from kitsch images sold in discount stores. These are reproductions of popular genre paintings, landscapes, flowers, animals, domestic scenes etc. printed onto shiny aluminium foil. In their hyper-real representations they are a grotesque deception portraying the ideal of a perfect, quasi-paradisical life, an untroubled world, in full-colour harmony with its natural surroundings. Refusing to allow himself and the viewer to be lured into this lie de Burca cruelly subverts it by dismantling the kitch images and reassembling them by physically and conceptually excising them from their habitats, pinning them down and forcing them to engage in a completely new discourse with apocalyptic dimensions. Bound within a metaphorical shallow relief landscape where size and space lose their anchorage, the hunter becomes the hunted, the golden city a dystopia of surveillance and menace. Employing irony and wit de Burca questions inherited cultural signifiers through exposure and deconstruction of the hidden tyrannies of cultural memory. *Text by Benjamin de Burca*