

**Incrustations of Time
Or: A Reality on the Other Side of Reality**

***“Because there is something about all beauty
that means you know nothing of it.”***

Rolf Vollmann

It is the colour that strikes you when you look at the work of Gerd Kanz: It's the very first thing, before even form and structure can assert themselves. Firstly, ultramarine blue of an almost painful lucidity, but also red tones that owe their luminosity to the most varied graduations of the pallet, absorb the viewer, and even the rich, orchestrated earth colours are inescapably captivating – as if there is an inner light pulsating through. Colour, according to the dictionary definition, is astonishingly just “a visual impression that results from the combined effect of external (physical and physical-chemical) and internal (physiological and psychological) factors.

However, Kanz' ultramarine is much more than “sulphurous sodium aluminium silicate“. It's even more than the lapis lazuli agglomeration that is found in nature, whose name admittedly does allow you to imagine its great mystical potential. From time immemorial ultramarine has been described as coming from “the other side of the sea” (ultra mare), so it wasn't just precious, but also paraphrased linguistically, as it were, the aura of this peculiar, glowing substance, which brings the magic of mysterious things faraway to the banal here and now.

Yet colour is much more than just painting material and its historico-cultural family tree is even more startling. It is only its artistic re-designation in to a bearer of meaning, though, that makes it a point of discussion. It only releases a new and different life-giving creation of context from compliance whose only purpose is a subservient submissiveness.

Etymological research has shown that the Old High German precursory form of colour (farawa) means “appearance, form and colour”, which

can be seen as a strikingly current means of expression in view of the colour exegesis of Gerd Kanz. Because, in Kanz' work, colour also always describes the form: amorphous conglomerates or extensive outpourings that appear only partly tamed by rectangles or irregular crosses. You could also say: in the powerful, archaic relief that comes from the monotone, clayey base of the picture, it takes the form of a succinct, possessive body of colour, the earthy, grainy pastosity of coarser substances collecting as carriers. It appears to have overcome its own protective seal and broken into the light from the inherited stony darkness: simultaneously quiet and powerful, soft and violent, reserved and energy-giving, a potentialis of current timelessness. It makes you think of lava, of stone-based fire and the fire rises in the artificially created incubations that extend way beyond the boundaries of the picture.

And there is also what is commonly referred to as structure. Here there are also awakenings and escapes, incrustations of time, sediment-like layers, seismographic faults, but at the same time, gashes, injuries, predetermined breaking points and whatever other metaphors you can think of. In a combined effect, this all results in compositions of unpretentious archaism, free from pathos, as if grown, but nevertheless begging for meaning. Inclusions of beings, synonyms for history and progress, for decay and persistence, resignation and protest. Kanz manages to create materialisations of the world, because he distils the life-giving qualities from simple materials and gets close to the spirit. A feature of the fine arts is that this spirit stays bound to material. It distinguishes itself in that it can be touched and felt. Hans Belting says: *“First a reality that can only be found in a picture saves its existence from confusion with reality.”*

Gerd Kanz too managed to give this idea form and created realities that imply more than that which merely exists – without first being able to know about them.

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