

Lucid, harmonious, full of sun and light. Offering the eye breadth and diversion. The region south of Coburg is picture book countryside. The willow-lined banks of the River Itz, gentle hills rolling softly to the horizons. The estate stands in stark contrast to the charm of its surroundings. The towering building, no doubt erected around the turn of the century, with its greying facade, is of somewhat gloomy and threatening appearance. However, it seems that it is exactly this contradiction that lends the place its unmistakable air, exactly that which makes it both unique and special. „I live on an island here” is how Gerd Kanz describes the conditions at the refuge he has discovered in the village. He has his studio in the spacious ground floor of the old industrial building. A major part of his work came into being here. The silence inherent here, the direct contact to the countryside have become of prerequisite significance to his work.

Gerd Kanz' pictures are works of effect, artificial constructions of painting, drawing and structure, art of colour striding into the spatial plane. They emerge without any programmatic concept. They are much more the results of a lengthy process which places great demands on the artist. In many respects reminiscent of natural processes: under the artist's guiding hand various substances are joined, combined, reconfigured to form new kinds of shapes and qualities. Just as natural development, the process unfolds but gradually. All growth requires time. This dimension, which in sculptural art can only be displayed via complicated iconographs, attains qualities of form during the process of creation. In Gerd Kanz' works one is confronted by time.

Amongst the various outlets of expression, colour takes on primary significance. In series of pictures and objets d'art created over years, Gerd Kanz has devoted himself to this phenomenon, plumbing its depths and stretching the boundaries inherent within. The dedication with which he has applied himself to these experiments was based on the discovery that he was able to lend expression to emotion with colour – a discovery which has always fascinated him. For a long

period he concentrated solely on the colour blue, in particular on its enhanced form, the tone ultramarine. He was gripped by the „... special and virtually inexpressible effect ...“ of the colour „... in its highest purity a bewitching nothingness, as it were...” So as to make visible both its material and spiritual qualities, he developed works of experimental character: cave-like tectonics, multi-dimensional creations whose organisational structures were occasionally reminiscent of insect constructions. Their corporeal existence served only to lend space to the varying interaction of colour and light. For the time being these spatial constructions represent the end and the pinnacle of his investigations into the colour ultramarine.

In Gerd Kanz' more recent works sublime encounters of colour dominate in which the artist strives to bring the intensity of colour expression to a climax. A description of these tones, which often obey diverging values, is virtually impossible in conventional terms as the issues are the results of continual shaping and changing, of heaping layer over layer, overlapping and penetrating. In broken ratios of enhanced tones, colour functions here as the encompassing and central field of energy for the picture. Growth in energy is attained through the relationship to the deteriorating values of the surrounding colours. In multi-toned transitions they extend as far as the morbid and perishing diametric opposite. Other works turn to exclusively restrained colours. They move in sensitive shades from greys or persist in gradual but hardly distinguishable whites and ochre, softly climbing towards the light. These are pictures of the Earth, eloquently displaying the artist's roots in the natural.

In his pictures of quieter tones, the three-dimensional qualities of the pictorial ground take on particular importance. It proves to be of intensive effect: tectonically rough, reminiscent of the surfaces of earth and stone layers. From this develops suggestive power out of which the poetry of the picture unfolds. The drawing engraved into the painted area strengthens the three-dimensional presence of the picture. In multi-lined traces the artist works his way into the paint as

if turning the earth to bring to light that which lies beneath. In clumsy geometries the engravings occasionally recall archaic symbols and ciphers. Thus lent an aura of the transitory, the pictures become allegories. Like witnesses of prehistoric geological formations they carry messages of remembrance and conservation.

Gerd Kanz' pictures are landscapes without direct reference to the tangible world, world inner pictures which justify themselves with feelings of deep attachment to nature. Their vivid language is founded on synergies. They reach the beholder via the sense of sight. And they sharpen the sensitivity to silence and time.

In a series of his most recent works Gerd Kanz once again attends to the colour ultramarine. Using his experience, now well-honed and

confident, he attempts to bring to effect the colour's light-like qualities. Unlike previous works these pictures are characterised by a motif – that of the willow native to the artist's home countryside. Radiating out of itself, as it were, it now seems to have been wondrously changed and enhanced – walking a tightrope along emotional intensity that can hardly be further heightened. The organic integration of the motif into the multiple layers of effect and expressional devices of equal value. Enchantingly they impart presentiments of the depth of wistfully romantic sensation. And they follow on in the context of his works which have both consistently grown and are consistently convincing and intangible.

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