

Tim Eitel's "Outlooks"

Tim Eitel is a specialist for paintings in which individual figures, colored planes and architectural structures fuse into units of mysterious but streamlined elegance.

Tim Eitel, excellently educated at the Academy of Visual Arts in Leipzig as are all other LIGA collaborators*, is perhaps the most subdued among his colleagues reveling with the paintbrush in melancholy and ornament. Eitel avoids making things easy for himself with velvet-lined composition. Climatically, the temperature he seeks is rather that of an ice chest.

Eitel's paintings from the last twelve months live from the staggered arrangement and geometrical organization of colored planes which, to be sure, blend tonally into one another, although sharp edges still hold them apart.

Regarding his characteristically bright and palely atmospheric paintings, Eitel's audience of fans prefer to speak using the cool tones of a mechanic. Thereby the eager attempt is made to very casually demonstrate a touch of special art-historical knowledge about the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) style, including its special aspect "disillusionment of the Eros". Admittedly, one thus wanders directly into the interpretation trap. For Eitel's pictures don't depict the more beautiful world, but the lively ability of one color to correspond with its neighboring color.

And they testify to the paradoxes of today: including through the fact that, as Eitel's momentary spiritual helms-men, the Dutchman Piet Mondrian and the Romantic Caspar David Friedrich are present.

You can't swing the rake any wider. Indeed Mondrian and Friedrich also embody the rift in art history in relation to the viewable and non-viewable; what the eyes can see and that which lies on the other side of visibility.

However for Eitel as, incidentally, for many artists before him, the material and the spirit are not opposites.

Thus modes of existence which normally lie on opposite sides of a clear line run into each other in his paintings. The visitor often finds him or herself before a question mark following from the wonderful color-plane emancipation; a release from the obligation to be bound to the representational. Narrative answers fail to materialize. But then so does the possibility within reality. Eitel's paintings refuse to hold onto the soul. Remote happiness remains remote. Are the wistful figures who turn their backs to us allowed to view it up close? Implacable hope—but for what? The paintings remain silent. Nothing is further from Eitel's intention than to unmask others, let alone himself. He takes as his own an introverted eye for outward appearances (including that directed towards the paintings of art history). His paintings are completely rooted in the present but appear nonetheless to have fallen out of time.

When the artist, in "Blau und Gelb" (Blue and yellow) from 2002, shoves a figure seen from behind between the viewer and a Mondrian paraphrase constructed in the painting, this entwines the utopian Mondrian in the painting discourses of our day. Mondrian's visions of a prohibition on portrayal as of the goal of developing a new, more ideal society and world are with Eitel no longer projections of the future, but décor. He views this possibly more attractive condition of the world as purely wishful thinking, but also as a necessary consequence of Piet Mondrian's theoretical system. We are dealing here with an ingenious form of archiving, in simultaneously citing the usual pair of opposites "Modern versus Realism". Previous lives as photographic sources capturing persons from the artist's surroundings can be easily established for the figures appearing in Eitel's paintings. To this extent, realism means the arrangement of a readable, by no means fictional mini-universe, where admittedly it's not Mondrian's "new man" making an appearance as "bearer of a coming time-consciousness", but a well-known contemporary, simply misconstrued in physical substance. Thereby Eitel allows us sumptuous enjoyment of the rich spectrum between figure and geometric forms, constantly interwoven between background and foreground.

A further highpoint of his production: In the series "Stadien" (Arenas) from 2001 consisting of 12 small-format paintings, Eitel dissects and describes the malleable ascetic exchange between object and color in a succession of realistic figurative fragments, pure color planes, constructive line relationships, all the way to the figure without picture-space dimensional relationships. And he shows this like a dismantled cyclic system, a diary of the detailed analysis of picture particles apparently fallen out of their frame of reference, which want to return to their framework after a flirtation with reality. All this in a mossy green tone that stands up to the mournful black border just as does the autumnal rust red, embedded between sober strips of white if the omens have changed.

Eitel seeks no paintings behind the paintings. He appears equally unmoved by the view, from no matter which perspective, of any sighted opponent's chocolate-coated best side. Superficial surprises and astonishments hold almost nothing for him and nothing transpires as the chronicle unfolds. This is because it's not existential states which set his canvases ablaze, but first and foremost constellations of form. Eitel assumes a certain haphazard attitude towards so-called reality and its alternatives. After all, it's not uncool to view the entire universe as a mere simulation.

Eitel's artistic yield of the year 2002 allows glimpses into nameless landscapes, forums of physical fitness, office rooms in which the eye of the artist arranges our physical life-function within seemingly ruler-drawn horizontal and vertical relationships. Simultaneously one is drawn by the figures, depicted with their backs to the viewer, into a paradise of longing that may weigh down the heart a little, but allows the thoughts to fly away everywhere.

Christoph Tannert

* The producer's gallery LIGA in Tieckstrasse 9 in Berlin-Mitte was founded in 2002 by Tim Eitel together with other artists from Leipzig.