

Strolling on Surfaces

A selection of recent works by Günter Malchow

You can see, what is to be seen. What can not be seen is not even hidden in unaccessible depths of the painting.

Günter Malchow's paintings do not keep a secret, which has to be detected in the structures and patterns. The pictorial rationalism is aligning colours and is not setting signposts in doing so. All meaning, all significance is being played upon the visible surface. The exhibition called »Constructing paintings from colours« is exactly what can be described without any speculation; look what happens on the surface being looked at by the observer. Step by step, every single construction activity can be followed. While curiously strolling over the surface, the propositions forming the basis of the paintings work plan can be collected.

Obviously, in order to avoid a centre all traces are extinguished during the pictorial process which might be able to lead towards any kind of median. Accordingly, the boundaries at the top, at the bottom, at the right and at the left are also missing. The paintings look like cutouts from an open colouristic system. As little as the coloured stripes feature a start or an end, as short is the way you can follow those on their unforeseeable route.

Sometimes, the symmetry is supporting the vision. The impression could be, that the paintings are divided into two halves by an imaginary centre line. At the same time it is hardly to decide whether a horizontal or vertical expansion is dominating. Just stay a little while on the surface, to realize the strategy, just to avoid everything which might be or become too explicit. By this, the paintings seem to levitate in a peculiar way. On the wall, they seem not to need a real fixation. The well-adjusted rectangularity appears to dupe gravity.

The fine-meshed, tightly woven and complexly outlined grids are hardly clear at a first sight, not even transparent. This is the way in what Günter Malchow's work is different from striped paintings as they appear again and again in constructive art. There seems to be no reasonable chance to try to guess the rules of the game. You should prefer to get lost in the all-over-structures and to leave yourself to the fluttering of the crossing colours. Fluttering is motion. Even if the impression

might be based on the presettings of visual perception, there is nothing wrong to say the paintings do not stand still, they are filled with energy.

But, there are some conspicuous irregularities, pictorial sections admitting their handmade colouring. This is what highly visible contrasts the purity requirements of a constructive art, which can only imagine paintings within an aseptic laboratory. Articles dealing with Günter Malchow's artwork underline the principled way of painting. There is no doubt, that the painter wants to deliver strict, logically comprehensible structured colours, so the paintings can always gain from the visual interferences of plain and space.

But, disruptions of the program can also be seen. Sometimes you seem to be standing in front of a skyscraper's window front and here and there, the lights are switched on, while being switched off at other areas, one floor illuminated another not. No director being present. It is not written in the script; it is more or less belonging to the impossibilities of innovative work, when the fulfillment of the pictorial principle is being rewarded more than adequate by inscribing a blue horizon here and darkening a painting's floor there.

Günter Malchow's painting is not just carrying out an implementation rule. It is more a living organism than a rigid system; it is surprising itself and is holding surprises. It is committed to the gracefully built interaction of liberty and order, not at all being shy to suddenly transcend the pictorial program. At the end it is time, consequently experience, which is accumulated in the rhythms of colours. These paintings, calculated and preordained as they seem to be, are also growing. It is mostly this vitality which is making the strolling over the surface a sensual event.

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