

Michael Schwarz: Spatial Paintings

Stefan Ssykor's pictures seldom have a title but always a theme. They treat space as a room of light and color, of labyrinthine spaces, space traps, spaces of perception, space clusters. This theme is treated by the artist in an inventive and obsessive way with the means and possibilities of painting, each time more expanded, within the limits of the picture. The starting-point of his artistic investigation seems to be as broad as unsystematic. It lies as much in the wide field of the visual as in the historical depths of a space notion which has its origin in greek philosophy and in the ambivalence of finality and boundlessness of the space. Yet spatial questions are again and again questions of perception for Stefan Ssykor. How can different space-conditions be presented? Which constructive and pictorial means can be used to invent certain spaces or produce particular space-effects? How do spaces change in which we move?

There were always two different ways to discern pictorial proceedings, representing the spaces on the surface of the picture: through the centralpoint projection including the depth gradation and the overlapping of objects and by colour perspectives including the knowledge of the different field values of color. Stefan Ssykor uses both ways to add another one and to elaborate it in his very independent way. By doing this he unites the space of Piet Mondrian's late New York pictures with Josef Albers' examinations "Interaction of Color" to create constructions of space, chromatic processes, interferences and overlappings.

This of course could work with the background knowledge of an experienced handling of the new media. The digitally programmed pictures have not only changed viewing patterns but also the themes and the pictorial processes of contemporary artists. Thorben Giehler, Sarah Morris or precisely Stefan Ssykor don't allow themselves to be impressed by the technical possibilities of digitally produced pictures. On the contrary the processes of construction, extreme perspectives, the combining of different spatial vanishing lines or the experimenting with color outcomes which remind us of extreme tracking shots of a camera, become the resources of his personal picture inventions.

Beyond all equilibristic of deduction in the history of art, the real field of investigation of Stefan Ssykor seems to be in the "virtual existence of computer-generated pictures" (ROLF SACHSSE). Without a doubt the space and the abundance in perspectives of this new world of pictures pleases the painter. But also the playing through of alternatives, the possibilities of rendering, the variability of adjustments are useful resources for his own picture imaginations. But the aim was always the painted picture, also to overcome the "sadness" (BEAT WYSS) and the emptiness often left behind after the construction of digital spaces.

Finally there are at least three qualities by which Stefan Ssykor leaves behind his initial material or: the world of his pre-pictures. There is first the material existence and presence of the works, their originality bound to place and time. If one wants to take in these works in a proper way, one has to go to see them. The picture itself makes its own conditions, how it wants to be seen and understood. Only in front of the originals one can follow and understand the structure of the surface, the size and the weight of the picture substance or the interaction of the colors related to the artist's intended statement. The encounter with the original of Stefan Ssykor's works is a condition without exception because each reproduction reduces the picture to those digital picture worlds which it comments as an original. Reproductions of the works are only to be had by losing this difference.

If this difference remains while looking at the original then a quality of deviation is shown in comparison with color - spatial pictures generated by a computer. With all the clarity of the picture composition, all the sureness in the selection, gradation and application of color the pictures of Stefan Ssykor also are alive with faults, disorder and a multiple valuation of perspectives which hardly could be programmed. The artist becomes here an "administrator of many discourses" (MILA HORKÝ), of a communicative network without being consumed by the media which he administers. He remains the author of a metaprogram which he presents with all his subjective deviations.

And finally: The program serves to create space. Space is the central theme of the works of Stefan Ssykor which are presented here. In the way how the artist creates these spaces is the decisive quality of his painterly work. Subjective deviations, multiple views and indifferences of spatial depth make the space sensually rather than rationally understandable. The original is preceded by a preknown space experience of a conscious evaluation of an existing spatial order. As the picture spaces from Stefan Ssykor aren't logically geometrically constructed and are not to be made objective they can be rather felt with the body and its senses. We imagine being in them, walking through them, feeling the different space atmospheres. In this sense they are "anthropological spaces" (MERLIAU - PONTY) which open themselves to the spectator and are at the disposal of a perceived experience.

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