

What Am I, What Do You See?: On Matthias Lutzeyer's Painting / Reinhard Ermen

The material is difficult to tame. It could just barely be subjected to a manageable containment, but in the substrate it still seems to bubble, and our gaze falls on a cooled-down surface that has only just solidified. The association with volcanic processes and their vicious primal slags has long since set in and will not be so easily driven out. These energy fields manifest something dangerous. Watch out—you could injure yourself on the sharp tips and ridges! The unruly mass arranges itself in initially anarchic-seeming structures, whose multitude is co-sculpted by light and in part lends the intense weight an almost unreal lightness. Gravity is defeated; the danger threshold decreases. A silky shininess, concentrated on points of culmination, already envelops the entire piece. Black? But even here, the constant longing to provide the objects with a small measure of peace by giving them a real, reasoned color classification, a sense of order, begins to falter. The color is working. If it is black, then it has fanned out into an entire palette of gray, ranging from anthracite to silver lights.

Painting might come to mind at some later point, but it does remain the necessary point of reference for this work and the way Matthias Lutzeyer locates it in the current debates on the medium. Here, the affirming act of seeing bumps into something fundamental; put another way: the accompanying removal of boundaries makes sense only through the discourse inscribed in it, and that which is a boundary is first reflected in the gaze! All references converge in the panel painting. A natural visual aide emerges in the distance from and the closeness to it. The objects do indeed have something expansive about them, and that is credited to painting as an increase in volume. These works occasionally also migrate from the wall to the floor, where they are perceived as pictures in only a very limited sense; but the vertical surface remains the primary venue for the medial balancing act. At a certain point, the natural stability of the material, or simply its weight, gets in the way of the mischievous escapism.

It goes without saying that one no longer paints in the classical sense. Matthias Lutzeyer models a material that he has in a sense reinvented according to his needs: since around 2003 almost exclusively soot pigments with linseed oil prepared in a specially developed process of generation as a dry doughy mass and largely worked by hand. Immediacy prevails in the monologue-like kneading of a universal color. The exploration of self-organized obstinacy, the propensity of the material in creative contradiction to an awareness of form, accounts for the attraction of this work.

Most of these rampant paint crags are developed around a wood panel and occasionally around a wooden frame. This is first a constructive, technical measure, but secondly also a conceptual one, which supports the objects so to speak from the inside; it enhances their appearance by confirming the connections to perceptual references in a pleasant ambiguity. Hence, the rectangle or square remains an everlasting point of reference, which also remains noticeable in the most adventurous dismantling of boundaries. The panel is ultimately the heart of the picture. While not necessarily

visible, it can be felt. We might be prompted to recall "The Princess and the Pea." But sometimes the anarchic pieces emancipate themselves from this stabilizing inner core and become organized in a random pile. Yet, released from its old functional processes, the color, in a highly sensitive process of reception on the part of the experienced viewer, instantly develops the ability to be painting; the slightest hint of context suffices. What am I, what do you see? If we can approach these questions sympathetically, we don't just have a real closeness, an affinity, to this painting but are also very close to ourselves.