

Bernhard Paul - polyphonia

Series, Repetition, Variation and the continually infinitely continuing - The principle of the series is represented several times in Bernhard Paul's painting. The artistic concept, the music that underlies painting and the temporal aspect of the production process, are all bound to the serial. For Bernhard Paul the serial mode of production is a pictorial language, which he constantly tests and expands.

But let us take a step back and look at the beginnings of serial art. Leading the principle of the series are Claude Monet's studies of light. The fascination of the light among the Impressionists was the starting point of serial painting. Only since Monet's studies of cathedrals and haystacks in the fields that the painting process was systematically divided into series.

The subsequent artists of the classical avant-garde also dealt with the function of the series. With the production process of serial painting, Pablo Picasso, Robert Delaunay, George Braque, Wassily Kandinsky and Piet Mondrian found a new formal language that brought abstract painting to the fore. It was a systematic exploration, a questioning of the concept of the picture, which gave a completely new look at art.

From 1910 onwards similar processes took place in music. Just as serial painting questioned established values of aesthetics, the currents of the so-called „new music“ brought about a reorientation of the musical language. Through the step-by-step task of the major-minor tonality up to the twelve-tone music, New Music broke with the harmonic system. Dissonance, polyphony and a radically new aesthetic were the result.

Bernhard Paul takes the „New Music“ as the basis of his art and produces from this influence painting processes. The constant repetitions, constants and interruptions bring Paul as a succession of brush strokes and rhythmic ducts on the canvas. With this method the artist produces results such as the composer: sound, polyphony and dissonance.

In the series „modus“ and „modulation“, the artist is guided by the works of the German composer Wolfgang von Schweinitz. The serially structured production always repeats the same brush strokes, which are lined up and carefully layered. The colors are applied one by one. It is a system with finely nuanced changes, overlaps and color variations that correspond to notes, beat and rhythm. The course of the painting becomes visible, the two-dimensional image is supplemented by a third, temporal, dimension. Paul's approach thus leads to a picture result, which is more than the pure visualization of the heard music. It is about the disclosure of the painting process.

Sometimes it is radical musical experiments like the compositions of John Cage for the prepared piano, which are decisive for Paul's works, sometimes the minimalist works of Steve Reich. In the new group of works „soft-facades“, in which the American composer Philip Glass is the musical godfather, the dynamic movement of the rhythmic brush stroke becomes superficial. In contrast to the dominant, prominently placed brushstrokes of the previous series, these images are characterized by extreme complexity and narrower color spectrum. The selected formats support the cut-off of the images and allow them to be found within the series.

One could understand Bernhard Paul's paintings as painted compositions, as illustrated music, but this would not do justice to his painting. It is more than that. Strict uniformity and systematic style of painting create an irritation, an overburden in all the clarity of the form language. When the individually applied colors are mixed in the eye of the beholder, the lines, repeats and rows are considered as a whole, then a flickering is produced which affects all the senses. The color areas of the individual works appear multi-dimensional and swell as a series to something larger.

Text:

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