

Transformation process

Emil Sorge transforms pictorial material into impressive shreds of the world. His expressive, abstract gouaches, his relief wood-cut paintings, the touched prints and perforated plate objects are accentuated with imperturbably vivid presence. After 25 years of occupation with free form finding in an all-over manner and a touch of contemporary archaism, Emil Sorge started in 2012 to process photographic material, generating most-overs bursting with unobtrusive colours based on specifically local photo material. Combining visual imaginations, he has rigorously pursued the process of transformation which he began against the grain and against any kind of smoothness as a member of the in-crowd of wild painting in the Eifel and "Rhineland Art Informel". This is presently continued in images with a flair of roughness.

Formerly, impressionistic haziness, cubistic interleaving, abstract composition surreal ambivalence or gestural informel succeeded in producing independent pieces of art counteracting the viewers' conventional attempts to recognize reality, Emil Sorge, however, achieves this effect by means of bluntly elegant fragmentation. The connection with a special local view – an internet image or a photo – remains discernible, but the consistently defined, spatially linear, typical wood-cut sub-structures do not conform to any system or superficial, commercial refinement.

That is partly why the spirit of opposition which characterises this generation of painters is preserved; but it also prevails in the choice of images representing touristic dream destinations (Venice, Angkor) and landmarks of catastrophe (Chernobyl, Maidan) as destabilising and shaggily attractive locations owing their exploration through the artist mainly to their chaotic formation – oases of destruction within a perfect illusionary world. They may be, for example, the unromantically ruinous structures of decay of old walls damaged by war or earthquakes, they may be barricade structures or relics of hastily left locations, uncontrolled growth and agglomerations of slums and densely populated areas, industrial waste lands or other deserted places. Emil Sorge understands how to develop such a choice offer of accidental shapes of decay and society relics reflecting human action; he knows how to transform them aesthetically into brash fringed

surfaces and crumpled linear formations. Inspired by a poorly resolved miniature photo from the internet, he creates a small-sized water colour with independent chromaticity which he transforms in parts into a large-sized wood-cut relief, from which he either produces a perforated plate object or an independently coloured printing plate from which in turn a coloured counterpart is produced by means of frottage technique. This continual process of transformation reveals the re-defining appropriation of images by a culture and by the individual, which is supplemented by the choice of images in which this transformation can be further accentuated, as is the case with the robbed copies of the Pergamon frieze.

Emil Sorge's visualisation of a personal and substitutionally cultural process of appropriation bridges space, time and genres; with the visual effects characteristic of the genre, he produces fragmented hidden-object pictures, attractive pseudo-idylls, charming renditions of rank growth, impressive shreds of the world, kinkily vivid locations of dis-comfort, detached minutes of situations which focus on the present critically, coarsely but benevolently. These images accept neither the illusions of technical high-gloss futures nor of apocalyptic catastrophes of decay, but succeed in gaining some presentability from the status quo without deception regarding the dichotomies and without ingratiating. Actually they are neither pictorial propaganda nor imitation, but something unique full of directness and judicious creative energy.

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