

ANDREAS BINDER GALLERY

Press release

MATTHIAS MEYER

Atropa

Opening: Friday, September 11, 2020 | 7 pm

OPEN ART: September 12-13, 2020 | Sat & Sun 11 am – 6pm

Exhibition: September 12 – November 7, 2020

With *Atropa*, Andreas Binder Gallery is presenting the 9th solo exhibition by the artist Matthias Meyer.

Since the beginning of his artistic career, landscapes have always been one of the most central motifs in Meyer's paintings. While in the last years, he was directing his gaze on nature and its pictorial implementation in play with the elements, in his new forest and lake landscapes he turns increasingly to the detailed depiction of flowers and plants. Large-format canvases no longer focus solely on visualizing the subjective power of nature. Rather nature is specifically named in its dichotomous relation between beauty and danger.

In this manner, the exhibition title *Atropa* does not only refer to the Latin translation of this deadly plant - depicted in the painting of the same name. Rather, the origin of the botanical name - derived from the Greek goddess of fate *Atropos*, the destroyer, who cuts the thread of human life - relates to the threatening character of nature, that can always be found behind all beauty. By dealing with toxic flowers, Matthias Meyer shows us the everlasting cycle of life, where destruction is always the basis for change and coming into being.

And just as nature in its abundance and perfect aesthetics is difficult to grasp in its complexity, neither can Meyer's paintings be interpreted on the surface of their subject or their technical style. Rather, Meyer's landscape paintings reflect the risk of devoting oneself to the essence of painting and the wonders of nature - unaffected by postmodern art discourses. In a subtle way, the painter confronts us with the dissonance of earthly eternity and finitude, utopia and dystopia, material and reflection.

It seems as if his paintings become the playground and projection surface for his artistic examination of the analogies of the materiality of nature, painting and life itself. The ability of water to change and adapt at the same time, is easily reproduced by the artist through the combination of permeable layers of paint, a linear composition and the use of color as a structuring element. In this way, the density of the forest and the unsteadiness of water are captured in a moment of silence, that makes us able to look into what is behind and below a world, that is filled with beauty and danger at the same time.

Thereby, the awareness of the destructive power of nature goes hand in hand with the recognition of the danger, that humans mean to our nature. Once again it clarifies, that the world can only continue to exist in harmony between humans and nature.

This content-related component is also reflected in the concrete approach of the artist: Meyer not only uses photographs as a template for his paintings. The artistic process also follows a geometric composition, that is based on the tradition of color field painting, and which is followed by an improvising creative process. The abstract suggestion of the landscape, combined with documentary details in the mirror of a conceptual structure, make it possible to reproduce the indefinable pictorial spaces of nature. With this approach, Meyer follows the view that painting - analog to life - is in a perpetual flow in which the picture "develops a life of its own and thereby almost retains something natural". Working with heavily diluted oil paint and solvents, random color gradients, smears and overlays support this procedure.

The focus on conception and pictoriality then leads to a principle of formlessness, in which color is used autonomously to compose the pictorial space. Thanks to this technical-conceptual approach, Matthias Meyer seems to succeed not only in overcoming the antagonism between figuration and abstraction, beauty and danger, but also between art, nature and life.

Text: Leni Senger

*Matthias Meyer (*1969) lives and works in Muelheim an der Ruhr, Germany. He finished his studies at the art academy Düsseldorf as a master student under the supervision of Professor Gehard Richter. In 1994, he was student at the Chelsea College of Art, London, and won the SBC European Art Competition of the Swiss Bankverein in 1995. In 2015 he received the work stipend of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation EHF 2010.*

National and international exhibitions (selection): 2018 „Tiefe Wasser“, Rosenhang Museum, Weilburg, Germany; 2017 „Glaesemer Tag“, Kunstmuseum Muelheim, Germany; „Bild und Bildnis“, Kunstverein Duisburg; 2015 „Drawings“, CASO, Osaka, Japan; 2014 Kunstverein Leverkusen, Schloss Morsbroich, Germany; „Das fluessige Element“, SØR Rusche Sammlung Oelde/Berlin; Museum Ahrenshoop, Netherlands; „2x2“, EKFF Eileen Kaminsky Family Foundation, NYC; „Vom tatsächlich Sichtbaren“, Kunstverein Duisburg, Germany; „Unlaengst im Wald“, Zentrale der Bayerischen Staatsforsten, Regensburg, Germany; Inter Cool 3.0., Hartware Medienkunstverein + Künstlerhaus Wien, Dortmund; Inner Space/Outer Limits: The Vern Collective, Walker's Point Center for the Arts, Milwaukee WI; „Landschaft entdecken“, Kunstsammlung Gera, Germany; „Maha Kumbh Mela“, Junge Kunst e.V., Wolfsburg, Germany.