

MOTION IN STILLNESS, STILLNESS IN MOTION

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*According to Buddhism, every subject ought to display motion in stillness and stillness in motion.
SOETSU YANAGI, The Unknown Craftsman*

When I first happened on this thought in a book by the Japanese philosopher Soetsu Yanagi, Rudolfine Rossmann's pictures sprang to mind immediately. The quotation also refers to East Asia, a world that constitutes a central issue of her work.

In April 2001, Rudolfine Rossmann presented several large-format cycles of Indonesian origin in Vienna's Wittgensteinhaus. Numerous conversations and Joint explorations centering around the exhibition "apa khabar" (which is Indonesian for "what's new?") form the basis for this text. In these conversations, we repeatedly reached the boundaries of what language can convey about painting and were faced with the impossibility to capture the essence of the pictures in words. Yet, an approach could be achieved along these boundaries. The paintings showed the way, their structure is reflected in the text. The following lines are an attempt to fathom the genesis of the pictures and their System with words.

*To look: at everything which overflows the outline, the contour, the category, the name of what it is.
JOHN BERGER, The Sense of Sight*

Painting is essentially related to perception and its transformation into color. And Rudolfine Rossmann is a painter. To call her an artist would be too wide, too inaccurate a term, would not describe the nature of her works and her approach. In its original sense, painting means the structuring of an area by means of color. Everything Rudolfine Rossmann expresses is connected to the way she works the canvas, positioning her brushstrokes, applying her colors.

A wide range of experiences has found its way into her painting. Again and again, she returns to her stays in Asia, to the luxuriant tropical Vegetation, the humid heat, the power of the colors, the atmosphere. Recollecting how the light changes, how it dissolves landscapes, forms, and structures. Commenting on how light and color presuppose each other. Hinting at how motion grows out of stillness, and stillness out of motion. Remembering how the air begins to shimmer.

For Rudolfine Rossmann, looking at things is an almost meditative experience of one's surroundings, an attempt to get to the bottom of the patterns and structures of natural forms and appearances. Again and again, Rudolfine Rossmann returns to her longing for this world and its particular ambience.

The moment of inspiration in which things begin to take shape generally goes hand in hand with a return to a lost experience. MICHEL BUTOR, Die unendliche Schrift

Her pictures are no inventions but rather unearth memories, articulate a return manifesting itself in color. And with the whole taking shape, Rudolfine Rossmann begins to feel the necessity of a

certain color, a certain tone. She Starts looking for it, working on it - "longing for a special experience, a special mood. Sounds, forms, and colors emerge. And at some point, it's just the tone that matters." (R. Rossmann) Her pictures are abstract in the widest sense of the word: echoes, tracks, memories of natural forms seen and felt.

Following a visual logic that is not necessarily fixed in advance. Yet exercises a certain pressure. That Rudolfine Rossmann surrenders herself to this process which she also regards as a game is crucial for her painting. To paint so that something may emerge - a re-encounter, but also a surprise.

Structure: arrangement of the parts of a whole in regard to each other; inner Organization; texture of relations.
BROCKHAUS

Painting as giving shape and structure to an experience, an impression, a memory. Painting as uniting experience and representation in a picture. Separating the essential from the random, arranging the parts, letting oneself be guided by the whole that develops. In Rossmann's works, this is an interplay of opposites: motion - stillness, area - depth, order - sensuousness.

Motion does not manifest itself as a trail of expressive gestures in her paintings but results from densely structured compositions. This density is a key to the specific nature of her work. The structure of her pictures grows with each brushstroke, with each layer of paint covering the other. This almost meditative form of applying paint lends her compositions the rare and very special quality of slowness. The overlapping of various structures of paint marks, dots, and lines creates a shimmer and vibration of its own. The pictures turn into something organic, something almost alive. A kind of interstice guarantees the subtle balance between area and space. Depth, resulting from the way in which color is applied, is something felt and has nothing illusionistic.

Rudolfine Rossmann creates States and structures that are mainly based on tones that have been experienced and can be relived. She always gets involved with herself and, in the face of natural phenomena, draws on her own feelings and moods. Her pictures are characterized by "rastered emotions."

Rudolfine Rossmann's paintings require time and concentration, a "slow inspection" in order to lose oneself in their "interstitial" being, to be able "to look" in John Berger's meaning of the word.

Composition is an absolute mystery. It is dictated by the mind. The artist searches for certain sounds or lines that are acceptable to the mind and finally an arrangement of them that is acceptable. The acceptable compositions arouse certain feelings of appreciation in the observer. Some compositions appeal to some and some to others. But if they are not accepted by the artist's mind they will not appeal to anyone. Composition and acceptance by mind are essential to art work. ACNES MARTIN, Writings