

1992 MARKUS BAMERT

Markus Bamert, art historian, Schwyz

Introduction to an exhibition by Alfons Bürgler in the gallery Oberhuus Greppen
August 30, 1992

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen
Dear Alfons

I have been following Bürgler's work and career for over 10 years. This development is quite interesting for a quiet observer, but in principle also well comprehensible.

Alfons Bürgler ventured to become a freelance artist quite early on. After an apprenticeship as a tailor and subsequent commercial training, he worked for several years 50% in an architectural office as an accountant. The rest of the time he reserved for himself for painting and designing.

For years he was almost exclusively concerned with the expressive possibilities of watercolours. In these years he created countless fine works. His model was our native landscape, but also flowers, people and animals. Alfons Bürgler trained his eye in these watercolours, which are strongly committed to realism. When I speak of realism, however, I do not mean exactly painted reality, but a strongly implemented one. To put it simply, the painter sees in reality what he wants to see. He picks this up and puts it on paper. On the one hand this can be form, on the other hand it can also be colour. Only in this way can a landscape be captured in terms of mood. Alfons Bürgler experienced an essential step in this learning to see in Morocco. In the Moroccan landscape he got to know light and incorporated it into his paintings. But the occupation with the landscape has also led to low blows, to pedalling at one's own place. In many works, which were created 4 - 5 years ago, one feels the search for new ways, for new possibilities of expression.

Alfons has continuously worked his way up the road. Great diligence was necessary. All too great was the danger of continuing to work the old way, especially as he was able to achieve quite a great success with it. The other danger consisted in jumping away from a walked path and falling for the experimental. Today's art scene runs the risk of raising the unprecedented to heaven, unasked whether quality or serious work is behind it. The flash in the pan is in demand and under discussion. Alfons Bürgler did not succumb to this temptation. Rather, he has sought a way out of his continuity, successively and honestly towards himself.

A flight over the landscape of Mexico can certainly be regarded as a core event in its long-term development. Suddenly the landscape presented itself to him in its geometric spread, fields, rivers, forests, steppes that line up next to each other. This experience gave him a new perspective on the landscape, which he has used in some of his paintings. The colour gains dominance, the form becomes simple and recedes.

From these works, which were also exhibited at the Schwyz art scene a year ago, the path leads continuously to the works exhibited here. At the same time, however, watercolours have been created that continue his tradition. However, one cannot speak of parallel paths if one first observes how the artistic development proceeds. Alfons Bürgler regards his watercolours in particular as studies for brushstrokes.

The watercolour requires precise, fast working and highest concentration. A revision is not possible, because a once set brush stroke cannot be corrected, if the picture wants to keep its freshness, its luminosity.

But now to the abstract and abstract works exhibited here:

All these pictures are a result of the intensive search for further development. Alfons Bürgler looks for new forms and possibilities of expression in large-format pen drawings. In addition, he strives to condense the intensity from sheet to sheet with the simplest of means. He then picks out individual forms from these sheets and transforms them into colour. These leaves are characterized by a great regularity of the picture surface. The tension is evenly distributed across the sheet. Thus they also radiate a great tranquillity. The tension, on the other hand, is to be found in the inner forms. Small figurines of different shapes scattered in a uniform surface are lined up next to each other, often framed with dark charcoal. These forms can be viewed positively on a coloured background. At the same time, large-format pictures were created on paper, which show the same regularity over the entire picture surface, but which are considerably refined in their overall expression. They are abstract, painterly surfaces, one can hardly speak of forms any more. Due to their fineness, these leaves acquire a fabric-like, textile, wallpaper-like quality. However, when viewed from close up, the finest surface treatment with a pen gives the watercolour structure.

Recently Alfons Bürgler has continued this technique. He created smaller square pictures on canvas, but not on primed painting canvas, but on ordinary used sheets that he tore into pieces. He prepared these pieces of canvas with paint, painted them, washed out the paint again; the frayed edge remains. Alfons Bürgler has made his mark on these prepared canvases. He uses very different techniques, watercolour, gouache, acrylic but also charcoal. He adopts the lack of direction of the previously described pictures. They are not worked out to a fixed or climax, but the signs regularly spread over the whole piece of canvas, even they seem to continue beyond the edge. The unfinished edge of the canvas reinforces this impression. Dabei sind nun plötzlich wieder Anlehnungen an die Landschaft zu erkennen, nun aber ganz anders als in den Aquarellen, viel zeichenhafter, stimmungsvoller, symbolhafter. Aber auch kleine figürliche Elemente finden wir eingestreut.

This gives these images a strong compactness and coherence that makes them appear larger than they actually are. In addition, they combine their statements, depending on whether they are viewed from a distance or at close range. The different colour intensity contributes significantly to this expression. The calm, washed-out background contrasts with the pastily applied foreground. This also creates a depth of image, but without using perspective.

As you can see, ladies and gentlemen, the artistic work of Alfons Bürgler has undergone a strong development in recent years. However, as already mentioned, this development is not erratic, but continuous. Alfons Bürgler's pictures will certainly not become easier to understand, but they will become more expressive. They offer the viewer the opportunity to spend more time reading what he wants to see in a work without overinterpreting it. I wish you much pleasure in looking at the pictures, and to you, dear Alfons, I wish much happiness and perseverance on your way, above all I wish you that you can continue on your way, continuously and not erratically.

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