

2002 WALTER HINTERMANN

Walter Hintermann, born 1942 in Zurich, was an art teacher and teacher for visual design at the Cantonal Teachers' Seminar in Rickenbach/SZ.

About the pictures "Körpererschriften" from the years 2001 and 2002

Alfons Bürgler's works in oil, acrylic and ink live mainly from signs and figures in motion and are reminiscent of hieroglyphic writings. The artist calls this type of painting "body writing" and creates a new pictorial language with this special art.

The colour

Alfons Bürgler's latest pictures live primarily from the monochrome surfaces whose radiance fills the entire room.

They trigger a feeling in me that is initially indefinite, which, after intensive perception, can give way to a very specific mood: A restrained, bright, slightly broken blue radiates clarity, firmness and "happy beginnings", a large, soft yellow surface fills the room with a spring-like, active atmosphere of departure. Other surfaces act as a challenge. An intense blue calls for a decisive statement, an almost nocturnal yellow-green calls more for an emotionally charged memory or for an observer who can endure strong feelings. The fascination of such picture surfaces arises from the way the artist constructs his pictures. It is usually several layers of paint that have been painted more or less transparently on top of each other. A layer of paint underneath influences the layer above. Alfons Bürgler often leaves a primed picture in his studio for a long time, checks the effect of a colour and then paints it over several times, depending on his sensation. He also experimented with the most diverse colour materials and design possibilities and thus achieved the most diverse pictorial effects.

Colour and shape

The picture surfaces are covered as if by a kind of writing or picture writing. These "craquelures" are often carved into the still moist uppermost pictorial font. This also makes the underlying colors visible and thus contributes to the subtle color effect of the entire image. The close connection between colour and form, between the picture surface and the engraved or painted signs, makes up an essential part of the intense radiance of the pictures. This creative effect is achieved by the fact that the artist intuitively and often consciously incorporates the spaces in between as design elements. He strives for a harmonious tension and balance between figure and ground.

Stelae and hieroglyphs

The signs sometimes appear as writing, sometimes rather as a picture narrative. But their effect is always connected with the impression of trance, of "écriture automatique": Together with the coloured ground, a surprising message hits me. It seems to me like fragmented messages from an ancient culture. - Are they scribbles of children excavated at a historical site and practicing a sign or pictorial writing? Do we encounter ancient toboggans, weathered by the influence of sand and heat, from a prehistoric high culture on the Euphrates? Don't the small-format, elongated wooden tablets with their writings remind us of scribbled wax tablets from Roman times?

Even the over-man-high, narrow steles, with their frontal orientation, look like ambassadors from a long-since sunken culture. When dancing figures are recognizable on them, they remind me of painted walls in Etruscan tombs, others remind me of Egyptian hieroglyphic writings, which bear witness to the happy, plump life in this world and in the hereafter.

Dynamics and Meditation

The signs on the steles and pictures are similar to each other, but none is the same as another. They often symbolize people in motion, and a strong dynamic emanates from them. Sometimes a line of dancing or moving figures suddenly turns into abstract and coded symbols that suddenly appear again as letters, numbers, landscape or architectural elements. Alfons Bürgler does not want to address a particular message to the viewer.

Once the basic colour mood of a picture has been determined, he brings himself into a state of absolute relaxation and concentration.

In this difficult equilibrium and in an openness to what is going on inside him and with every brush or scribble stroke on the picture surface, he lets an image happen. While painting, he not only dances pictorially spoken in front of the canvas, but also transfers the perceived impulses to the picture surface in a very real way, in fine rhythmic and dancing movements.

An old element from Bürgler's oeuvre suddenly regains importance: the element of repetition or automatism, the connection of the material with the spiritual.