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Woven Dialogues

Hartwig Bischof's pictures-in-picture objects

Hartwig Bischof's work is both graphic and textile object. They are picture-picture pictures. These pictures create a similar effect as exponents on top of each other. Large framed pictures are woven or crystallized from a pattern whose building block is just one module. Its repeated serial copy, its change and its transposition create such an intensively tingling weave. These pictures emerged from building blocks which are traces of pictures. When a motive is moved a bit it obtains a halo and this sets the pictures in motion. Currently the picture-in-picture technique is something that is often discussed or staged but Bischof has used it as the composition principle of his pictures for a long time.

These pictures are built from overlapping like the results of calculated genesis. What you get to see is clear and at the same time incomprehensibly complex. The pictures are visually attractive and at the same time confusing. They are formed by the subtle weave of photographs and computer print-outs, which can be touched.

Bischof's work shows the urgent need to ward off confusion – which is usually only concealed decoratively – with inner structure. The confusion is framed. Supporting frames of reference are offered to manage the task but these frames of reference remain indefinite and flexible enough in order to be able to deal with significant things and with changes.

In our over-written, over-organized, over-designed and over-formed environment Bischof's pictures are messengers of a hoping strategy, which relies on the discovery and the input of context; which seeks the common theme and weaves it together; which takes away compulsion from the additive and from the periodical repetition through determined intervention of changes without trivializing regularity.

In life integration is never simply there. It remains a process of classifying and relating and of searching for more suitable frames. The criticism of today's popular establishing of cultural patterns of ethnic characteristic remind us that the increasing use of normative and schematized definitions for order's sake doesn't only lead to heterogeneity but also into idleness, if the new and different elements, which again and again force their way into the system, are not dealt with. Schemes, which developed from suggestion and repetition, are to be estimated – again and again, according to situation and position – at usefulness and valuation in their relation with other things.

These pictures are an event of structuring. The pictures used in the structure or their use through structuring are secondary in the face of that. Structure-pictures play a special role in the art-work of this century. In addition to art it is the period of comparative structural analysis, of structuralism and of the structural model of sub-atomic elementary particles. Hartwig Bischof's pictures are structure-pictures of a special kind. The uniqueness already starts with the structural peculiarity of the feigned weave of the composition and it shows in the dynamism of changing relations in the entire picture. The structural values lies in such peculiarity – i.e. the decisive, complex value of the rela-

tions. The substance of the pictures is to be found in the abundance of relations which is used and can be experienced in a great variety of ways.

The technical, visually controlled way of making with its sensitivity and sophistication presents – apart from the woven-in content and its emotional and communicative relevance – a highly up-to-date result: our knowledge and the matters of concern are integrated in a ‘weave’ of relations in a mimetic network. Such experiences stand out as the present; they are not just represented like in illustrations which hand down present and past experience.

In talking about the substance of the pictures we have to deal with events and changes in seeing which influence Bischof’s work. The changes that pervade many areas today play a part in Bischof’s work and influence and encounter with these graphic objects. They are connected with an increasingly inter-textual and inter-cultural lebensraum and room for movement where standard and relations change abruptly and invite changes in the valuation. We live in the still unmastered and seemingly insecure conditions of the transition. Bischof’s work surrenders to this situation which leads into a pictorial integration of the transition of systems during the digestion of his pictures. In everything that can be systematized the procedure of discovering correlation discloses itself exemplarily. This means the approximation, the equivalent, the interrelation, in which the processing of a picture and the natural time experience are able to illuminate each other.

The closing century has looked as intensively as never before into brain research to find out how seeing and pictures come about. The distance between the world of experience and the postulated real world still remains unbridgeable. It is the understanding of the unattainability for reason that takes us back to the experiences with pictures. But it doesn’t happen every day that you see pictures that offer many associations. Such pictures, in which zest for life and energy become the present that can be experienced, are precious among a multitude of empty pictures made only for decoration and effect and only used for reaction.

Hartwig Bischof’s pictures are of such preciousness. We are confronted with work-in-progress, with experiences of continuing perception, or with slowed down perception in the spreading; we are confronted with the emergence of pictures from pictures, with unforeseeable shapes; with work-in-process, which reminds us that in a world of finished products and successful idols being human and becoming human are still incomplete processes.