

Neo Rauch

Paintings like I would like them to be

Someone told me once that - if one would not know - one is scarcely able to assume where and when my paintings came into being. And I do not want to conceal how comfortable I felt regarding this statement.

Some detect American traces in my works. Others see characteristics from the Far East. Only the nasty colleague living in the neighboring village recognizes the provincial stuff with a look at his surrounding.

Somehow they all are right because my arsenal is sturdily constructed so that it is able to absorb elements of any kind and consistency. The viewer loses his way confronted with paintings like I would like them to be. They stop the viewer acting reasonably and suggest a possibility to leave the track of reason.

It is one of the author's obligations to create this sphere in a responsible manner. And I believe that a reduction in this apparatus with only innovative and progressive elements left is little appropriate.

The most important attributes in painting for me are peculiarity, power of suggestion and timelessness; for me the title *Zeitgeist* sounds like gunfire in an execution.

*Zeitgeist* painting touches excoriations whereas timeless art is able to release us from commonplaces and rather causes us a subtle phantom pain referring to archetypical injuries. Every time when I am standing in front of a blank canvas, I am at the very same time standing in front of a fogbank. Before stepping dauntlessly into unknown areas the question is what will come up and what kind of accessories I will need to master the excursion successfully.

Basically a great risk should be guaranteed and confronted with the situation one discloses one's rank. Much to my surprise I find the younger generation digging in the trenches of the 1950s by claiming that only the operator with abstract instruments displays truly courage in the fogbanks.

The war between figurative and abstract seemed to die away. The last signs were skirmishes between Sunday painters. And I am annoyed to find that they now affect painting classes in the eastern part of Germany. I pose the question regarding risky behavior in a manner not comprehensive to the late abstract autocrat.

I open the different contaminated chambers – shuddering – and I take out diverse material for temporary storage in the areas of my paintings.

I lead scared employees out who are being held in barracks in quarantine and I offer them the possibility to settle down in my foggy chambers. I care for their comfort by adding cultural elements. And in doing all this I know that I am walking on a narrow path with relish; on a narrow path on which I could stumble into the direction of ridiculousness, harmlessness and embarrassment. Therefore I operate in marginal regions doing it my way. Here it might be added that the artist's working place should always be installed in outskirts.

I am aware of the fact that my paintings partly bear the mentioned directions in which one may stumble and that these stumbling directions shall be included. Those tinkering with secure positions of the late modern era shall show me wherein they take a risk.