

Nataly Hocke – *Kontaktaufnahme*

10. Juni – 25. Juni 2023

Deconstruction = Construction

The sculptor Nataly Hocke surprises again and again with her assemblage sculptures, which consist as a composite of a wide variety of materials / found objects and their individual stories.

The title of her current exhibition, *Kontaktaufnahme* (First Contact), already suggests much that could be meant by this composite. The language alone reflects an ambiguity that is undoubtedly found in the work itself. It tells stories that have neither beginning nor end, developing solely in our thoughts, mindful of the experiences and adventures that everyone carries around with them and that are triggered associatively. One could also say that the sculptural and pictorial works are poetic creations that get their charm from their subtlety and richness of association.

But not only by that. The artist is a master in combining a wide variety of materials, which can be found objects or made of simple raw wood, often in combination with equally poetic self-made photographs. The stories, the states of being of the newly arranged and processed things knit themselves into a new work and bring to light the precision of Nataly Hocke's settings. But also the knowledge of the beauty and diversity of the materials, their haptic and associative qualities is inherent in her work, creating a new harmony.

In "Kontaktaufnahme" (First Contact) several composite architectures grow into the gallery space. One consists of parts of a felled fig tree that Nataly Hocke had brought to Berlin from Ticino years ago. Paired, founded and supported and accompanied by disassembled frameworks of old founders time wooden chairs. The contrapostic nature of the individual partial forms to each other, the freedom of their idiosyncratic arrangement, is a feast for the eyes.

Another composite sculpture consists of an old dismantled Thonet chair, which corresponds with the sensitive swings of likewise dismantled, no longer functional or salvageable violins, thus developing a varied dynamic. The added violin bows, also a testament to their former use and decay, form a sensitive and narrative counterpoint, and hauntingly animate this object sculpture, so disheveled is the formerly tautly stretched horsehair. When the inner back bar of the Thonet chair backrest - formerly formed into a cantilevered U by heat and steam - positioned upside down now functions as a support leg, along with the sawed-off backrest harboring the character of a seesaw, this overall structure transforms into a surreal and strange sculpture. Nothing is what it once was. But a new one.

cankraft, the sculptural image, as the artist puts it in a nutshell in a conversation about this work, is nothing other than a framework, constructed from cabinet and found boards and sawn wood, which in their own local colors produce a concert of differentiated wood tones. The center of the framework is a section of an old, probably Wilhelminian, cabinet wall, the connecting rail of which is part of it. A large unfathomable grease stain on the right side has animated the artist to answer it counterpostically by applications of white correction tape strips (for the typewriter) in an almost geometric manner and to wash out parts of these line fragments under delicate white clouds. A framed painting is created by the colors of the various woods and panels with a painterly center.

The play with frames is always present in Nataly Hocke's work. Since the beginning. There is no artist who manages to create a nevertheless well-arranged and geometrically perfect frame from odd legs and angles. Frames that are enough for themselves (for example, in *Echo*) or are part of a whole.

Part of the exhibition are the edition photographs that comprehensibly circumscribe the exhibition title "Kontaktaufnahme" (First Contact) - it is, for one, the snail on the hand that becomes a jewelry ring (black-and-white fine art print), or the color photograph of a chewing gum machine holder taken over by life and time, meanwhile in a bleached red hue at the Yorkstraße subway station, full of sayings and tags of countless street artists and passers-by. In the bleed of the photograph, the subway sign can still be seen, and in between an application of dried grass, collected by the artist's son in Kassel in the meadow, which is always the venue of the various documenta exhibitions. In this way, the artist weaves history, often her own personal, into a new, without determining the exegesis of her pictorial works, since the viewer knows nothing about the details.

Thus it is also fitting that a double work by Karl, the artist's eight-year-old son, is integrated into the exhibition. The apple does not fall far from the tree! It is two convincing and very graphic drawings of exotic birds, united as a black and white copy in a frame, and hung high above the passageway, watching over the exhibition.

Contact for what may come.

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