

Landscapes and Gardens

An exhibition by the Japanese sculptor Takayuki Daikoku and the Berlin painter Susanne Knaack, curated by Semjon H.N. Semjon at Schloss Ribbeck.
November 16, 2014 – January 4, 2015

Takayuki Daikoku's sculptures are characterized by a distinctly Japanese mediated view of the traditional arts. This includes his Art education at the Osaka University of Fine Arts and his German/European experience from his life as an artist in our country over the past three years (in Rathenow district, Havel). Daikoku's current formal language in his sculptural work is unthinkable without the experience both worlds.

His latest ensemble sculptures transcend the experience of nature in organic, abstract shapes and create a whole that is simultaneously an imaginary (garden) space in which they are embedded or a part of. Here the artist has recourse to the tradition and uniqueness of Japanese garden art and landscape architecture and combines it with his personal interpretation in a contemporary sophisticated sculptural work.

Consequentially the county Havelland commissioned Takayuki Daikoku to realize parallel to the spring 2015 Federal Horticultural Exhibition (BUGA) his Land Art project. The sculptures for the installation will be presented in a small, enchanted grove in the historic Castle Park Wagenitz in Friesack. The county and the village community Wagenitz have generously promoted the completion of this new work group.

Susanne Knaack, who studied in Berlin with Prof. Georg Baselitz, creates stunning painterly imagery via a paint pouring technique she has developed over many years. The paintings shift between abstraction and a supposed imagery of nature, representing natural forces such as lake, mountain and cloud formations. In his essay to Knaack's catalog of 2012, the Berlin art critic, Dr. Sebastian Preuss emphasizes not in vain that Knaack's imagery is often taken at first as a photographic landscape. In terms of painting technique, there is little more done than pouring the fluid paint to the canvas. Knaack's experience and competence with this technique allows her a certain confidence in calculating and guiding chance effects, in the controlled movement of colors according to gravity and in the allowance to thwart and choreograph movement through the canvas. In the larger scale canvases the artist must move by grasping the stretcher cross from behind in the desired directions and can only rely on her experience in this act, because she can not see what happens

on the face of the canvas. The visual power of her paintings creates an imaginary (landscape) space - and here we draw the first points of contact with the sculptor Daikoku. We get lost in the spacious and saturated realm of an imagined (natural) world and see ourselves reflected in its forms.

The nature-viewing experience that the German painter Caspar David Friedrich portrayed in his paintings of the early 19th Century and his placement of the viewer within this experience finds a renaissance in Susanne Knaack's paintings. What differentiates Knaack's work is that her imagery is a kind of artificially produced image of nature that is shaped in our minds that still suggests the romantic feeling of the experience of grandeur - in this case, of art!

And here it is fitting, that the exhibition takes place in Schloss Ribbeck where its main protagonist Theodor Fontane had dedicated his most famous poem: *Herr von Ribbeck auf Ribbeck im Havelland*. The circle of Art, Nature and Culture closes here. Fontane is also known for his masterpiece *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg*, an inspiring and valid written monument even today for pedestrians and cyclists, describing the experience of nature in the context of a built and cultivated world (villages, towns and manors, parks fields and meadows).

The Paintings of Susan Knaack and the ensembles and individual Sculptures of Takayuki Daikoku open in the exhibition rooms of Schloss Ribbeck as a new experience and connect so convincingly the natural and cultural environment of Havel country with the castle rooms.

Semjon Semjon N. H.
In October 2014

Further information on the work of the two artists can be accessed via the homepage of Semjon Contemporary (www.semjoncontemporary.com).