

Susanne Knaack – *New Works*

In-scapes

These pictures look like paintings, but strictly speaking they are not, Susanne Knaack hardly ever takes a brush in her hand. Paint rollers, scrapers, squeegees and other forms of tools find no use. But how then did these exciting, placeless and timeless coloured images come into being? They all seem to represent something; one cannot help but recognise something here and there. Even if Knaack does not actually depict anything - precisely within this paradox lies the decisive attraction of Knaack's paintings.

Cloud formations stack themselves into fantastic aerial sculptures, they gather together and disperse, ripple and evaporate. Like fine cotton wool or dark 'downpours' they travel across the heavens. In other pictures we see tumultuous sea, wild mountainous waves are in flux, no-one could survive in there. At times the spume flows in long strips towards the shore, at times the water boils in whirling witch's cauldrons. There are suggestions of northern coastal landscapes, which one knows from the Baltic Sea or the east coast of America, peaceful lagoons and wild fjords, but also mountain ranges or deep ragged mountain silhouette, which could have their origins somewhere in China. And everything in black and white and an infinite number of greys tones; Knaack permits no other colours.

At first glance in the case of Knaack's 'Grisaille' landscapes and grey seascapes one may think on Gerhard Richter's 'Seapieces', but this association is a false trail. Richter creates real representations, in that he paints from photographs. Knaack on the contrary depicts nothing, her suggestive representations of nature come into being on their own. In the true sense of the words, she lets things – in this case: the paint – make its way. She pours the extremely diluted acrylic paint on to canvases lying on the floor. Then she tips, turns and shakes the pictures, throws on more paint and moves the frames once more, lets the watery pigment dry and once again allows new black, white or grey flow over it. Knaack can only hold or move the large canvases from behind, from where she cannot see the flow on the pictures and above all cannot intervene in the process.

Completely without a sense of coquetry Knaack says 'I can't paint.' Of course she can, but of course only in her own way. After years of experimentation she handles her technique of 'throwing' paint with virtuosity. It is an eternal process and she comprehends the pictures as stations in a search. What she is looking for, she expresses in general terms. She is however only able to part with a picture, if she recognizes something out of her memories and feelings. We too, the viewer recognize something, but it is then our own associations and inner images, which are reflected here.

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