

Bettina Weiß – *Misty Molecules*

March 2nd – April 14th, 2018

For many years the artist Bettina Weiß has been dealing with the geometry of the ornament and its relations to pictorial space and the mediums of canvas and wood.

The basic modules for her paintings, which are assembled from minute geometrical forms, are the square, the triangle and the circle. From these elements the artist forms her own world, which might occasionally have a centre with forms emanating from it, which can even cover the entire surface of the picture, and/or fan out into smaller parts.

The colouring of the individual fields is never purely monochrome, even if it might seem so from the distance. The impression of 'graphic paintings', however, is inhibited from the very beginning. Already through priming in several coloured layers a resistant surface is created, a diversified ground, which influences the colours that are to be applied – once with a glazing effect, once more concentrated, and rarely almost pasty. Particularly this resistance of the painting surface, in turn, promotes a more differentiated application of colours, since when the canvas is colour-glazed, more pigments cluster in small depressions and indentations than on raised spots. Through intersecting geometrical forms a spatial depth is created in the overall picture, which has an intensifying effect also on the next painted layer. The underlying forms show through as a result of colour-blending through layering, but also through accumulations of paint on the surface caused by the shaping edges of the framing tape: in front of these edges thin paint collects and when the tape is removed, a ridge of solidified paint remains.

Due to the individual nature of its texture – wood grain, fissures, cracks and other injuries of the surface resulting from the manufacturing process and differences in the alignment of the fibres – the wooden base offers an invigorated surface, which is, according to the vision of the artist – disclosed, left almost transparent, or covered more densely with several layers of paint, almost negated.

Thus, an exciting interplay of forms and colours is created in relation to the wooden painting surface. With each new layer of paint the overall appearance of the picture is changed, creating unrest or spreading visual tranquillity, and needs to be checked as to its *raison d'être*.

Bettina Weiß frequently supplements these centralistic pictures with others which can be conceived as *all-over* visions, revealing only part of a constructed world that could be endlessly continued into space.

Here, one is tempted to say that the created *all-over* structure might represent a module for an endless ornament. In her centralized works the ornamental impression cannot be avoided. When multiplied, the repeated element would become clearly apparent, as the central geometrical forms are floating upon a coloured ground, which would generate their expansion into space forming a kaleidoscope-like pattern.

The exhibition title *Misty Molecules* refers to the fact that the artist conceives the individual geometrical shapes as molecules, as minute constituents of a larger picture. In this current series the artist experiences a momentum of withdrawal. The colours appear as concealed

by some kind of mist and reduced in their luminosity. The notion of sublimity and the contemplative nature of the picture are thus augmented.

Despite the visual language, which consists of many single shapes, the works of Bettina Weiß emanate a relaxed, free calmness and invite the viewer for a 'walk with the eyes', to lose oneself and become immersed in another world.

Semjon H. N. Semjon, February 2018