

Abraham David Christian

1.6.-7.7.2018

Abraham David Christian (*1952, Dusseldorf) divides his works into six categories on his website: the five elementary materials earth, plaster, paper, bronze and steel, as well as the technique of drawing. The unusual mix of material and technique is hardly surprising in the case of Christian. There is a unified formal idiom inherent in drawing and sculpture, without the one format serving the other. The drawing is not a sketch, the sculpture not a model, and yet the works are distinguished by simple gestures and signs. An archaic vocabulary of primary forms seems to possess a timeless validity or impacts like materialised models for design or industrial products that might be almost gratuitously filled with purpose. Sobriety and clarity characterise the works, conveying a peace, concentration and familiarity that arise not from the rigid symmetry and persistent rectilinearity but from the harmony and the rhythm. Thus spiral-shaped bronzes become drawings in space on which the eye continues the circular movement of the forming hands. Surveying this artist's oeuvre, we discover his intense preoccupation with an unadorned and consistent formal idiom which is continued both in the choice of rudimentary material and in the formal accordance of titles in the tradition of concrete art. This narrowly staked out formal repertoire gives expression to an engagement with movement: circling, staggering, layering and repeating. The piling up of similar bodies has something meditative about it that is transferred to the viewer. The coherence felt in his sculpture and drawing stems from the balance between lightness and precision.

The artist Abraham David Christian feels equally at home in Hayama, Japan, Dusseldorf and New York. His reserved and unobtrusive works give expression to the respect for and affinity with tradition that is lived out in Japan. Yet those works do not rely on a national symbolism, but instead call on a visually accessible transnational pictorial idiom.

Franz Krähenbühl

> Galerie Haas, Zürich: Abraham David Christian, Sculptures and Drawings, 31.6.-14.7.2018