

Abraham David Christian - "Rascheinäs"

9.4. - 14.5.2022

Opening Fr. 8 April 2022, 18-20h

Rascheinäs. A resonant name, a Maiensäss, located above Lenzerheide, mountain landscape, streams, fragrant meadows in mountain spring. Rascheinäs 1-5 (2020), fine graphite traces on thin paper, reduced lines like winding paths, as much landscapes of the mind as mapped wanderings in the emptiness of space.

Set against this space of sound and image are three bronze sculptures (1990/91) with volumes nested one on top of the other, between 21 cm and 23 cm high, reminiscent of stone stupas at Tibetan heights. The resulting connections and contradictions are purely associative, much of which we understand only rudimentarily at first glance. We are moving in the realm of hunches, of intuitive understanding, and beyond purely European visual habits. The auratic and at the same time gestural questioning of these groups of works is at the center of Abraham David Christian's entire artistic practice. In his work, the artist is always part of the work, getting involved, penetrating it, circling it, distancing himself, and surrendering. Effort and discipline combine in a continuous search for the essence of things, knowing that perhaps we can only perceive their shadows

The Japanese cultural area is both an inspiration and a field of artistic research. In the process, the Swiss landscapes effortlessly combine with the reduction of Zen. The minimal formal language opens up our thinking spaces. While looking at intertwined strips of paper cast into bronze, as in *Interconnected Sculpture* (2017), is it possible to see the sun sinking behind a flower-covered hill? The beauty of its reflection before the inner mirror, its light still visible, the shadows, the idea that it will return the next day, a moment of peace before darkness falls. Memory at such moments is like a pond where fish swim effortlessly beneath the crystal clear surface, calmly making their intersecting courses before a frog jumps in and everything dissolves (to paraphrase two famous Japanese poems).

Perhaps one of the most elusive terms in Japanese aesthetics is Yūgen 幽玄. The term, taken from Chinese, originally means dark, deep and mysterious. It refers to a dimension behind the obviously perceptible, which emphasizes the implied and hidden more than the open and clearly exposed. Yūgen describes a mood that opens itself to moments of the transcendent. Its core, however, does not lie in an invisible world behind the visible one, but is found in that inner-worldly depth of being to which the work of Abraham David Christian refers. In this respect, his works are also an exercise of imagination and empathic vision, like a koan that a Zen master gives to a disciple, inviting us to leave the confines of convention; a simple form whose poetry lies in its complexity.

Damian Christinger

Abraham David Christian

Lives and works in Chur, Hayama (Japan) und Düsseldorf.

Selected exhibitions:

Kunstmuseum Bochum 2020; Kunstmuseum Pforzheim 2016; Museum
Küppersmühle, Duisburg, 2010; Neues Museum Weserburg, Bremen,
2003; Wilhelm-Lehmbruck-Museum, Duisburg, 2000; Sprengel Museum,
Hannover, 1994; Ulmer Museum, Ulm, 1989; Kunstmuseum, Düsseldorf,
1983, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, 1983; documenta 7,
Kassel, 1982; Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, 1978;
documenta 5, Kassel, 1972.