

Perseverance - On the art of Michaela Eichwald

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Her gestural "dirty painting" with a relief surface refers to the informel of the 50s. The bases for the paintings are not artisan-stretched canvases with laboriously applied high-quality gesso, a nicely sanded obsessively smooth surface, possibly with an added priming, where there is no need to paint on in the end (some would say you must not), but various artificial leather, textiles, and all ridiculously cheap materials. She refuses nobleness and sometimes exposes her work to weather. I personally see this intervention of exteriority as proof that—"something on the canvas has survived." Fading, roughness, and dirt might be accidental, but real. She keeps the disgust in the picture with perfect virtuosity. She balances between attraction and resistance, and she is not afraid of anxiety stemming from the malignancy of a gesture without a goal. She perseveres, resists, and continues, even at the cost of seeing something repulsive. (From time to time, I am scared in front of the paintings, when I see there is something ugly or boring, and the fear of "I don't know what I am doing" is almost constantly there.)

The existence of her private narrative and primitivism in its forms, color palette, and brush strokes is present and purposefully unexplained. Her strokes seem entangled in themselves. Tangling is conditioned by loss of control. Her "loss of control" may be uncontrollable, but she is not disoriented and clueless. She doesn't take a step back. In my opinion, she found a clove, with which she attached the end of the skein firmly to the ground before stepping into the labyrinth. Lines and gestures, if desired, can stop at any part of the image. They don't say, "Wait, where am I? Who am I? Where next?" They intertwine like intestines, into which all the remaining organs disgustingly fit. The paintings look as if they are painted inside of her. Some entrails fly through the air, others sit firmly in place, all communicating with each other in the paintings and fighting for a place—there are plenty of predators in her paintings.

Her horizontal formats compress the forms, they are squeezed, turned into each other. However, they seldom reach the edge, they remain offset from it and thus seem to reject the two-dimensionality of the image. Maybe they find those rigid edges repulsive, and maybe they want to talk about other worlds outside the plane in which they find themselves, about subsets in sets. They react to the materials and the basis.

The characteristics of materials that she uses bring humour and uncertainty—"Did she paint all those dots on the picture? Take a closer look, that's the background, but do you think these drops were intentional? That "haha" appearance, how ridiculously it looks from that factory, and I, as a painter, now spray three times with a brush, and voilà, it's right there."



Michaela Eichwald, Die Künstlergruppe Mulheimer Freiheit, auf dem Weg zu Bio's Bahnhof, 2015
Akryl, olej, lak, tempera, vosk a grafit na umelej koži, 136 x 268 cm

This painting is not one of my favourites, I have no idea why I chose it, perhaps I want to be persistent as Michaela. When I think of Michaela's paintings, I think through my body. I imagine her speed at which she painted, when maybe she used her palms, when she dried the still-wet paint with a cloth. How long did she wait before entering the next line, the shape. There is a lot of story in this particular picture that is not fixed. The mood is reminiscent of the quarrels of the marketplace. I don't feel that need to draw boundaries and bring shape to it. I miss dominance. That vertical line through the center was dominant, but she covered it with light gray and suppressed all its aspirations and ambitions. Is this the love of not claiming things? While watching the color transparencies, I am aware of her work on the entire surface of the image at once. I don't know if she fought, rubbed, scratched, and whipped the canvas after what she saw in front of her, but she definitely persevered. An organically formed image is created by no more than perseverance. It is difficult to determine which parts and shapes escaped the dirty gray that coalesced on the surface and which came after it. The survivors take the form of organs and body parts, as Michaela says, it's hard to escape the body and faces, the human eye tries to see them everywhere. The fat trunk draws the most attention to itself, right next to the laughing profile. It's a bit of a circus. The image is, thanks to the thick line, divided diagonally in half. The line in the picture, in general, is the most quarrelsome. It shouts, "Oh, I stayed, I'm important, and I legitimise the shape." The image is less compressed than Michaela's others. With them, I have the feeling that after a long time, they will form parts of themselves into herds, and then they will drive them from meadows to corral, as in the painting: *Die Unsrigen sind fortgezogen*. The accumulation of layers gives an idea of the time of the image and of the mentioned perseverance that is not easily satisfied.



Kölner Morphologie, 2020 (komisch gedehnt)

The three forms look like evolution, but the evolution of what? I'll start with the right one. The most twisted, introspective, with an aura of beginning, which conceals certain efforts to expand. It looks static and fearless, as a single-celled organism that has nothing to hesitate about, with just one of its cells. The middle shape probably ate its ancestor, and now it is boldly pushing to the edges, already touching, but still quite not yet, because it is evolving. Without shame, it tightens the muscles from which uneaten leftovers protrude. The last in line shows that evolutionarily, it no longer needs a sleeve. It flows over the edge like a teenager, who doesn't want any pre-trampled form, instead, it sometimes falls apart and invents. It seems to be constantly on the move, so that if we don't watch for a while, it will occupy everything. It could even travel back in time and cover its entire evolution.