

Michaela Nolte: Lending Wings to the Head (EN)

In an age when the boundaries between original and copy are blurred, and not only the human hand is replaced by technology, but nature has also long arrived at “the age of its technical reproducibility” (Gernot Boehme), the painter and draughtswoman Ursula Goeb presents herself as someone who works by hand. The artist does not confront us with figurative, but with haptic realities; she emphasises the material character of the images by allying mixed techniques using a palette knife with a marble-like transparency or the aleatory quality of water colour painting. By contrast, as a counterpole, there is the spiritual aspect - when the heads, insects, giraffes or beetles transpose us into organic rhythms or spaces close to nature, creating a world of their own outside of landscape and urbanity.

The compositions transform the material itself into the bearer of meaning and thus, despite their abstraction, point back to a concrete, tangible materiality within the pictorial world. The simultaneity of different painting materials and pictorial fabrics maintains a subtle balance between fundamental and delicate aspects, a principle recalling that of construction kits. Goeb combines organic and tectonic aspects, from time to time constructing her pictures from already existing sketches and drawings without disguising this recycling process. These material realms are laid around the small beings like protection, or they explode as a counter action to them.

What appears abstract initially is also evidence of deep, sensitive observations. As a photographer and draughtswoman, Ursula Goeb was involved in zoological studies for more than a decade. Sometimes the artist slipped into the role of a biological assistant, taking a hand in experiments herself. These experiences enter into her world of images and motifs repeatedly; a permeation of the two disciplines, research and art.

The starting points are always of a concrete nature, and the titles underline the basic material content: Hand, Head, Insect, Figure, and Metamorphoses. In Goeb's works, sediments of personal experience seem to become deposited on the threshold between physis and the sublime. But they do not lead to the reproduction of an animal; far more, they evoke the sense that we are participating in the pupation of a beetle, for example. In “Insect Battle”, the lines describe the wings and their movement, but they also have their own value, which - as a fine web - permits us to experience the way the larva bursts out of its cocoon in the “Metamorphoses”.

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Translation: Dr. Lucinda Rennison