

## **The Painter Anna Krammig** by Jean-Christophe Ammann (Translation K. Zeitz)

„Oh, art is something more different: it is the need to portray life piece by piece, to put together a mosaic stone by stone, then portraying a part of life's whole; it is watching, smelling, feeling and listening, the throbbing of every nerve's tip, the listening within ones own shell...“<sup>1</sup>

All of Anna Krammig's paintings are still lifes. Silent lives with smells that are painted out of memory, with a curious glance, that we remember from childhood. However, they are done without pathos, a mindful structuring of light and shadow, of surfaces and depth of a space. Interiors in particular, are what have lately taken the artist's attention. One almost wants to say they are reified abstractions, scarce but still contain within them decisive details pulled into perception: a door handle, a Thonet chair, a radiator with a regulating valve, a slightly open door, the ornamentation of a handrail...

Intermezzo: There was a heavy conflict between abstraction and the figurative throughout the first half of the 20th century. This was the case for most of the century until the last quarter when a paradigm shift occurred. The general school of thought was more oriented towards modernism, and rotated 360 degrees, however, the conflict still smoldered. Offshoots of a long gone avant-gard are being persistently conducted with an educational impetus. You can put it like this: „objective“ research against intimacy and an innate world. Both must not disclude the other but one ideologically insists on polarization. A recent example for this was a call by a University of Fine Arts for their painting departement, asking that the professor should cover various media, implying that painting, solely, is outdated nowadays. Such nonsense!

Let's return to Anna Krammig. She is a painter. She paints figuratively. Since this is anachronistic, it is up-to-date for her generation, because digital fascination has crossed the zenith.

Painting today is the most difficult, particularly the figurative, since its tradition has been lost. If in literature and film the drama and poetics of being human are being emphasized, the question then arises why painting is excluded.

Anna Krammig stands in the middle of rooms and landscapes she paints. In a precise perception, through layers of memory, she tells us about the suddenness of seeing her subject. I was talking about smells. Foremost they are the floors. Polished floors. But there is also the smell of staircases. Those of small rooms with roof angles and built-in cupboards with doors left open. The smell is not to be defined, but you will recognize it right away when coming across it. This has also something to do with painting. The brushstrokes dissolve into a shiny surface, a depth bathed in light. The bright light of the walls collects as if it is dust as shadow in corners and edges.

There are snow-covered forest floors with the shadow of dark tree trunks. You can smell the humidity. Snow doesn't crunch. Silence is omnipresent. No crowing of crows. No traces of humans or animals. Stark trees and branches close to each other, like a bamboo grove, staggered into the distance, a silent intertwining of interfusing impenetrability, interweaved with light, static and oscillating. A silence that confronts you with yourself, that causes you to listen within yourself, so that what you see becomes your own emotionally charged, and at the same time, empty reflection of yourself. Emptiness as a distance to give shape and structure.

Modernism as a collective biography is only relevant with restraint to young generation of artists. Henning Ritter, longterm writer of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (Frankfurt General Newspaper)*, wrote at the end of the 1990s, that there was not anything new in arts. Why? Because he believed in holding onto the historic avand-gard's ten-year-rhythm. To the modern

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<sup>1</sup> Vitomil Zupan, „Reise ans Ende des Frühlings – Blitz in vier Farben“ (*Journey to the end of spring – lightning in four colours* [Translator's note: this is the translator's own translation of this title by Zupan and does not correspond to any already existing translation thereof]), Klagenfurt/ Celovec 2013, p.39

painter of today, tradition builds up the collective biography and out of a consciousness and reasoning of this presence discovery happens. In other words: there is nothing to invent but plenty to discover. Anna Krammig's paintings do something with me.