

## On Rudolfine P. Rossmann's *Malabar Series*

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Rudolfine P. Rossmann's pictures play with our profoundly human fascination with order. They entice us with the representation of structure and a dynamics clearly motivated in itself, and make us see that our mind will not nearly suffice to understand the laws of these structures and dynamics. For the viewer, this irreconcilable dualism in Rossmann's work has something hypnotic – and sensual, simply because there is nothing but the senses with which he can give himself up to this attraction.

Have you ever watched a flock of starlings sweeping through the evening sky? This sight arouses in us the fascination with an overwhelming chaos as well as the apparently infinitely precise realization of an order unknown to us. The commotion makes us halt because we become aware of the invisible energy at work. For many years, Rossmann has observed and explored such phenomena, which she reduced to the following formula in a conversation: "Both in nature and in art there is an energy behind the immediately visible." It is this energy which we lose ourselves in when watching a flock of birds or looking at Rudolfine P. Rossmann's paintings and drawings.

Many of Rossmann's works derive from the intense reconnaissance of experiences she has made on her extended travels, particularly in Asia. They result from the curiosity about old and modern iconographies and particularly from the immediate corporeal and intellectual, technical and aesthetical analysis of the structures and dynamics of surfaces revealing physical processes, biological growth, or civilizational phenomena such as urban traffic grids.

The starting point for Rudolfine P. Rossmann's current works are reflections in the water she studied in India. She spent several months in the Malabar Backwaters in the south of the subcontinent, which lent the series its title. These backwaters, a labyrinthine system of lakes, lagoons, and rivers with densely populated shores and banks in the hinterland of the Malabar Coast, are used as natural traffic routes. Rossmann exposed herself to the people, the landscapes, and, above all, to the manifold movements of the water: "Everything is mirrored in it," Rossmann says, "trees, buildings, people; and the movement of the water brings forth dynamic drawings." Networks, fluid sceneries, structures that create radically new and gripping surfaces from the reflected forms, the wind, and the flow rules of water – phenomena that appear for a moment and dissolve in the next, merge and, in arising and developing, evince that special dynamics whose inherent laws present themselves to us, yet will remain beyond our reach.

Rossmann's art lies in making the intensity of such phenomena emerge with her paintings. Drawing on what she has observed, she makes it emerge anew, different in color and material, processually, in layers and overlapping areas. "Ultimately, working on the canvas points the way," runs Rossmann's simple and radical statement that also describes the abundant abstractness of her paintings. This statement holds true for both the process of painting and the reception of her works. The pictures manifest a natural order through the structures that appear in them. And, in the overlapping of movement and tones, they, establishing the subtlest balance, open up that magical spatial depth from which the special dynamics and shimmering beauty so characteristic of Rossmann's work unfold.