

## Apa Khabar

*Wolfgang Hilger*

In the past century, abstract painting has moved into a border area which leaves almost no new formal possibilities to be discovered. Yet, as often in the history of art, the interplay of known, frequently even contrary positions and concepts in the late phase of an epoch may lead to interesting constellations comparable to those resulting from deliberate confrontations. Thus, the last decades have repeatedly seen a tendency to merging emotionality and aesthetics. Gerhard Richter's and Sean Scully's works strikingly evidence that valid conjunctions can be derived from the positions taken by the Constructivists, the representatives of Informel, and sensitive-esoteric aesthetes and colorists.

Today's good and demanding abstract painting certainly goes beyond positioning nonverbal signs, visualizing a logistic system, or fixing emotional arbitrary products in a pictorial form. Though all abstraction entails a detachment from obvious reality, it should always be based on a conclusive concept that is absolutely valid within the context of its limits and accounts for its author's intellectuality and intentions.

Rudolfine Rossmann's pictures are the outcome of a long-term process in which the experience of landscape and nature is as crucial as the permanent reflection on the significance of color, the quality of the pictorial surface, and the remnant formal elements still definable. Rossmann always relies on shaping her areas by letting a color dominate and drawing on its structural relations which may develop from simple configurations to free ornaments.

Rossmann's painting process is an irritating succession of alternately applying and partially removing layers of color. The lower layers are actually only activated when the artist takes off flat portions of color that cover them. This sgraffito-like

technique creates translucent tones which are rather subtle in their intensity. After spreading further layers of paint, Rossmann will start working on these. Many of her paintings are dominated by dark backgrounds with dots, stars, suns, and squiggles that seem to be added but, as closer inspection reveals, are positioned on the lower layers – a strange optical paradox which works the other way round with light grounds.

However, Rossmann's pictures are certainly no mere formal plays. The origins of her works always relate to nature, whether the pictures reminisce formations and intense impressions of East Asian landscapes, give room to micro- and macrocosmic structures, or outline archetypical constellations from subconscious realms of imagination. All her motives and intentions are controlled by the ordering reflection of an artist who does not leave anything to chance in her pictures.

As for her means, Rudolfine Rossmann is a minimalist really. Her paintings are neither loud nor ostentatious, defy all great gestures, and yet unfold fields of tension rich in contrast to the roaming eye. They call for contemplation and do not run the risk of suggesting esoteric speculations. Even her large formats are characterized by an extreme subtlety; Rossmann actually seems to need these dimensions to unfold her world pictures. Her detailed glimpses of a subjective flickering cosmos do convey a quiet, unobtrusive form of spirituality.

Rossmann's pictures stand for both sensuousness and a strong sense of orderliness. They perfectly exemplify a form of abstract painting that combines sensitive as well as conceptual principles. The manifestation of a noble, profoundly traditional aesthetics in all this removes Rossmann's work from all short-lived zeitgeist musings.