

Lutz Braun « Wizard of Worry »

L'œuvre de Lutz Braun paraît au premier regard traditionnel et facile à saisir, mais les scénarios qu'il évoque sont des rêveries d'une mélancolie humaine face à un monde en perdition. On y trouve tout un mélange de scènes et de motifs traditionnels, contemporains mais aussi des couleurs et des formes abstraites et libres jusqu'à des espaces vides. C'est à travers ce mélange étrange que le magicien Lutz Braun arrive à créer une nouvelle espèce d'allégorie poétique. Ses images sont entièrement déçues du temps et sa palette de couleurs particulières chatouillent par leurs applications entre le nébuleux et le très psychédélique. Tous ses scénarios sont trempés dans une ambiance post-apocalyptique. A travers ces fictions effrayantes, Lutz Braun décroche la destruction subtile d'humanité inhérente à notre mode de vie, pénétrée par les structures et l'idéologie capitaliste. (Elisabeth Kepler)

The works of Lutz Braun who lives in Berlin show ruinous, dreamy to nightmarish landscapes some of which with humans appearing umbrally. Every idyll emanating from an urban scenery has been eliminated. Loneliness and transience are dominating – a kind of end timeliness. But still, space is filled with an atmosphere of a strangely inviting effect to the viewer. Bizarre, humorous issues are resonating.

The topical aspect described above, as well as the specific narrative form are very significant in Lutz Braun's paintings and drawings. Both factors, historically and in regard to the artist's personality, will be looked at in order to approach their complexity.

In the painting "Vägen" for instance, a figure is wandering alongside a dying forest with trees stripped of all green. Bare and naked, the branches are pointing sideways – a motif which is repeated in the overlonged limbs of the figure making its physicalness seem grotesque in front of the barren landscape. Emptiness and silence reign and alienate. In this way, commonly valid knowledge and the everyday experience of the viewer are subtly being hawked: a forested landscape becomes threatening, a human being a shadow of itself. But where does this spark of the humorous, accordingly resembling "hope", come from? It is the choice of colour, above all, what determines this ambivalence in depiction and demonstrates the connection of the artist to his former teacher Per Kirkeby. While the greater part of the work is a shimmer of tone-in-tone, suggesting a dim mood, the cloudless sky opposes in bright blue.

Concerning colour, the artist has stated that, as a holder of atmosphere, it is his most important tool. "All my inspiration flows out of it, and into it, and therefore I want to distance all of my intentions, ideas and theories from it." (1) Let us dwell further on form and subject – as carriers of Braun's most peculiar atmosphere of scurrility through ambivalence. His instruments for that purpose are contradictions and radical contrast on one side, to exaggerate and escalate to the point of excess on the other.

A theory of the author Michail Bachtin in his work "Carnival And Grotesque" (2) accurately describes that build up of atmosphere, even though giving very different examples. Physicalness and body referred procedures - like ingestion or digestion, copulation, growth, aging, illness, death, etc. (3) – are especially suitable for bizarre portrayal. When processes of excess and exaggeration are added, that is already grotesque in itself. Size shifting,

metamorphosis, pervasion and fertile overgrowth are just some of the perceptions coming to mind while regarding the works of Lutz Braun.

As a superordinate concept, alteration could be applied. The boundaries of an abstractly conceived body are removed, and thereby, "the grotesque (...) will never be finished, it is something nascent, in constant formation and creation, with autonomous qualities." (4) Therefore death, in its variety of manifestations, is omnipresent. Deterioration of landscapes is of lesser concern when figures have skull-like features instead of individual physiognomies. Decaying, apparitional humanoid shapes and animals show up, urban sceneries seem decrepit and abandoned. The artist's affinity to death should be easy to connote only negatively. But is this not about a far more complex narrative than just the one regarding the end? Does there not also exist a (pre-)narrative? All works of Lutz Braun have a storytelling, stage-like character to them. His sceneries appear like film stills. Besides reminiscences of scenarios of horror films, there are also those of comic-strips. Thereby, one picture frame functions as a detail representing a generic plot. In this sense, the artist can also be seen in a tradition, among others represented by William Hogarth. "A story is told" - this is why Lutz Braun will very often work with found materials. Old wooden planks or discarded carpets, as well as classical canvas, will serve as painting grounds. While this is not about the idea of recycling, it means dealing with actual substance, to understand the particular history of an item, to artistically utilise and forge it inseparable with one's own inspiration. The past - as incident or atmospherically, as memory - merges with present and future, both equal in relation to each other. Lutz Braun strives to eliminate time as a factor in his work, to conceive and reflect it as synchrony. By the way, this is the reason why he does not date his works. He wants to relieve them of obsolete cultural bonds, so they can claim their engagements simply by being in the world. Is it something real or a dream, a chimera or even utopia? All of these are possible, from an individual aspect of reality up to a blending without boundaries - within the artist's pursuit to undermine, to repeal the omnipresence of mortality. In the works of Lutz Braun, "the sickness unto death", an existential kind of fear is to be resolved by transformation. May the viewer find inner latitude(5), for the demise of the old will bring about something else.

Text by Felicitas Kirgis

Notes:

(1) Lutz Braun. (2) Bachtin, Michail: Literatur und Karneval. Zur Romantheorie und Lachtheorie. [Übers. von Angela Hauserner]. Frankfurt a.M. 1985. (3) Vgl. Ebd., S. 17. (4) Ebd., S. 16. (5) Kierkegaard, Sören: Die Krankheit zum Tode, Rowohlt, München 1969.

Lutz Braun is a conjurer of spectral images grounded in a subtle expressionism that grounds itself in the real. Amidst the virtual scaffolding that his late 90's generation accepts as second nature there is a throwback quality to the way he constructs pictures. They are consciously undated works that exist in a bygone time vacuum detached from all things digital yet correspond to the deeply troubled technocratic globalism of 2010.

With this new series of paintings "Lichtjahre" the artist furthers his concept of Lu "abstract realism" with images that synthesize his perceptions of realism, abstraction, and time itself. Braun's previous experimental use of found material such as wood, carpets, and all manner of cheap textiles and synthetic fabrics has now given way to pure painting on canvas. In so doing he shows his maturation as a painter ceding to its weighty history while taking his personal iconoclastic point-of-view to a new level.

Always lurking is an uneasy alliance between nature and man. A barren landscape within abstract flourishes and pulsating mark making is central to the imagery, as are allegorical references to violence, alienated, emotionally detached youth, psychoanalysis, dreams, Frankfurt school philosophy (Fromm, Adorno), and the uncanny. The colors are muted and sensual, stained to bleed into the toothy texture of the canvas.

Burned forests set amidst a panoramic wintry mountain terrain exude a naturalist romanticism albeit with more subdued emotive quirks than that of abstract-expressionist angst. A primitive looking beaten youth brandishes an AK47 assault rifle amidst an abstract field of brown as a fire blazes in the distance. A thatched-roofed hut, tombstone, and rudimentary wooden shacks set in a forlorn landscape is all sooty gray blue lines, and wispy black strokes underscored by a monochrome of cool to warm to hot pinks.

In such narrative limbo a ghostly presence is felt, a mental plane where perhaps the pangs of the vanished old world, or the psychic cold sweat of a reunified Germany tremulously ensconced as a central player within an old Europe now amalgamated into a super state.

Romanticizing the freedom and individualism of a revolutionary Lutz Braun the painter trusts his own memories ability to transcend the clichés painting styles. Through the artifice of narrative invention he conveys our unconscious fears as heavy-laden with dread as it is. He subtly rejects the false values of his generation's consumer culture by presenting its flipside of disillusionment and disenchantment with the burgeoning global corporate feudalism.

For the newly developing 21st century folklore he's an avenging angel and his own road guide well equipped to avoid the headlights of a twilight world of delusion before the info-bots attempted takeover of man's psyche.

Max Henry, 2010

BIOGRAPHY

LUTZ BRAUN

né / born 1976 Schleswig
vit et travaille / lives and works in Berlin

EDUCATION

1998-2003 Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main.

FÖRDERUNGEN / GRANTS

2011 Artist in Residency, Centro Cultural de Andratx, Mallorca.
2010 Bourse de la Lenikus Stiftung, Vienne.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2018

NEW POSITIONS, Art Cologne, Köln.
"passing motorist", Galerie Jacky Strenz, Frankfurt am Main.

2016

"Rat Park", Galerie Nagel Draxler, Köln.
"Spuk ist die Absicht", Galerie Jahn, München.

2014

"Les Feulies", mit Sebastian Hammwöhner, Galerie Sandra Bürgel, Berlin.
"Phobismus", mit Isabelle Fein, Galerie Goldnuß, Bogen/Niederbayern.

2013

"Memento Mio", Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin.
"Teenagerweisheit", mit Alexander Ruthner, Wiener Art Foundation/Büro Weltausstellung, Wien.
"Kunst von der Erde", mit Ioan Grosu, Kunstraum München, München.
"Die Zukunft liegt in Ruinen", Galerie Jahn Baaderstraße, München.

2012

"Der Tod ist eine Geisteskrankheit", ACME, Los Angeles.
"Mercy for Objects", mit Isabelle Fein, Terminal Projects, New York.

2010

"Lichtjahre", Galerie Christian Nagel, Berlin.

2009

"Sternendreck", Waggon am Kulturgleis, Offenbach am Main.
"Abstrakter Realismus", Blanket Gallery, Vancouver.
"Corpse Telefon", mit Michael Moos, After The Butcher, Berlin.

2008

"L'air solaire", Galerie Christian Nagel, Berlin.

2007

"La nuit des zozos", curated by Yves Brochard, Random Gallery, Air de Paris/Praz-Delavallade, Paris.

2006

"Kolten Flynn", Berlin Biennale mit Kai Althoff.
"Symetrie der Dummheit", Galerie Christian Nagel, Köln.

2005

"Solo für eine befallene Trompete", mit Kai Althoff, ACME, Los Angeles.
"Lutz Braun & Bernadette Mittrup", Galerie Christian Nagel, Berlin.
"Sad, not Sorry", Galerie Antik, Berlin.

2004

"Milchlein Schälch", mit Christina Morhardt, Ausstellungsort
Restitution, Berlin.
"Der Tod ist durch die Begrifflichkeit gegeben", Galerie Antik, Berlin.
"Verwesung ohne Mitwirkung der Zeit", Galerie Antik, Berlin.

2003

"Die Schande der Freiheit", Autocenter Berlin.
"Eisenzahnstrasse", mit Stefan Mannel, Strelitzer Strasse, Berlin.

“Büffelhumme!”, Galerie Antik, Berlin.
“Für die Einen ist es ein Licht, für die anderen Schatten” mit Thomas Schroeren, Prinzessinnenstrasse, Berlin.
“Psychische Wärme”, mit Thomas Schroeren, Mühlenstrasse, Berlin.
“Gesunde Männerlogik”, mit Thomas Schroeren, Engelbecken, Berlin.
“Kampf den Psycho-Bulldozern” mit Thomas Schroeren, Mühlenstrasse, Berlin.
“Nach Köln”, mit Christina Morhardt, Atelier Giovanna Sarti, Frankfurt am Main.

2002

“Endlich Allein”, Lola Montez, Frankfurt am Main.
“Dornwald”, Menschenraum, Berlin.

1999

“Das Grüne im Menschen”, Ponyhof, Offenbach.
“Psychomauer”, Rotari, Offenbach.

EXPOSITION DE GROUPE / GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2018

“mi chiedo se c'è un posto in questo mondo...”, KM, Berlin.
“Braun Bell” – Dirk Bell, Rasmus Bell, Lutz Braun; Zwischenwelt, Berlin.
“Romantik”, Kunsthalle Schlieren, Zürich/Schlieren.

2017

“WELCHE ZEIT, SAGTE SIE, DACHTE ER.”, Kunstverein Wilhelmshöhe Ettlingen e. V, Ettlingen.

2016

“Jeder sollte in der Lage sein, Kunst zu erwerben”, Provinz @ Kunst Kunsthalle Recklinghausen.
“Wendezeiten”, CCA Andratx, Mallorca.
“Global Terror”, Nagel Draxler Kabinett, Berlin.
“Lutz Braun + Isabelle Fein”, Center, Berlin.
“Der Zeit angemessen begegnen”, mit Armin Böhm und Thomas Grötz, Oldenburger Kunstverein, Oldenburg.

2015

“Gastspiel”, Schönwald Fine Arts, Düsseldorf.

2014

“O.N.P.A.P.E.R.”, Galerie Fred Jahn, München.
“Es ist schon alles gesagt, nur noch nicht von allen III”, Galerie Matthias Jahn, München.
“Den Wald vor lauter Künstlern”, mit Tom Biber, Andrew Gilbert, Illegales Museum, Berlin
“Black Market”, Lehrter Siebzehn, Berlin

2013

“Die Blendung”, Galerie Sandra Bürgel, Berlin.
“Imaginäre Lösungen – in diesem Sinne I. Ein pataphysisches Spektakel”, Kosmetiksalon Babette, Berlin.
“Ex-Fullmoon”, Centro Cultural de Andratx, Mallorca
“Painting Forever! KEILRAHMEN”, KW – Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin.
“DAWN OF THE HERMETICS”, Kosmetiksalon Babette, Berlin.

2012

“Bilderladen Dumont-Carré”, Galerie Christian Nagel, Köln.
“ABOUT FACE”, ACME, Los Angeles.
“Arbeiten auf Papier”, kuratiert von Matthias Jahn und Felicitas Kirgis, Galerie Fred Jahn, München.
“leben schweben beben”, mit Anne Lina Billinger, Lutz Braun, Max Brand, Galerie Jacky Strenz, Frankfurt am Main.
“Lutz Braun, Andreas Diefenbach, Hans-Jörg Mayer, Henning Strassburger”, Galerie Fiebach & Minninger und Galerie Christian Nagel, Köln.
“Feierabend”, mit Matthias Dornfeld, Lin May, HP Zimmer, Reception, Berlin.

2011

“Der Abstrakte Realismus”, Galerie Matthias Jahn, München.
“Works of Paper”, ACME., Los Angeles.
“10 years of Autocenter. Benefit Auction”, Autocenter, Berlin.
“The Cannibal’s Muse II”, Autocenter on location / Based in Berlin, Berlin.
“The raising of Lazarus”, Fabrikgebäude Urbanstraße, Berlin.
“Alptraum tours to Berlin”, Projektraum Deutscher Künstlerbund e.V., Berlin.

“La Vallée Patibulaire”, Rote Insel- ehem. Schlachtere, Berlin.
“Captain Pamphile – Ein Bildroman in Stücken”, Sammlung Falckenberg, Hamburg-Harburg.
“Augusts Llen” Hotel Intercontinental, Wien.
“The Black Goddess”, Autocenter, Berlin.

2010

“Demolition Milk II”, KIT-Kunst-im-Tunnel, Düsseldorf.
“Paradise Lost. Holidays in Hell”, CCA Andratx, Mallorca.
“Captain Pamphile – Ein Bildroman in Stücken”, Städtische Galerie Waldkraiburg, Waldkraiburg.

2009

"Là-Bas", Galerie Crèvecoeur, Paris.
"Until The End of the World", AMP, Athen.
"Crotla Presents", lothringer13/laden, München.

2008

"L'Arrière-Salle De Notre Esprit", Showroom Berlin, Berlin.
"Die große Weltverschwörung", Koloniestr. 13, Berlin.
"5000 Jahre Moderne Kunst. Painting, Smoking, Eating", Galerien der Stadt Esslingen am Neckar, Villa Merkel und Bahnwärterhaus, Esslingen.

2007

"Bonjour Monsieur Ensor", Gmür, Berlin.
"Palisadenparenchym", Danese, New York.
"Unsere Affekte fliegen aus dem Bereich der menschlichen Wirklichkeit heraus. Our affects fly out of the field of human reality", Galerie Sandra Bürgel, Berlin.

2006

"Nach dem Beischlaf ist die Seele traurig", mit Thomas Schroeren, Klaus Winichner, CourtYard Gallery Annex, Peking.
"Contragolpe", Karl Marx Allee 87, Berlin. (mit Diego Fernandez, Andreas Diefenbach, Filipe Mujica, Johanna Unzueta etc.).
"Von Mäusen und Menschen", 4. Berlin Biennale 2006, Berlin.
"Bonanza", Jack Tilton Gallery, New York.

2005

"Kirchliche Kunst der Neuzeit", Galerie Antik, Berlin.
"Kir Royal", Carlos Depot, Berlin.
"Bauer, Braun, Koch, Reinhardt ...", Galerie Giti Nourbakhsh, Berlin.

2004

Gruppenausstellungen, Schickeria Bar, Berlin.
"Gasthof zur Hundsrute", Galerie Antik, Berlin.
"Outlet 4", Frankfurt am Main.
"Alptraum", Borsigstrasse, Berlin.
"GASAG-Kunstpreis 2004", Kunstfabrik am Flutgraben, Berlin.
"Olivia Berckemeyer – FROHE ZUKUNFT", Halle für Kunst Lüneburg.

2003

"Albert Schweizer spielt Bach", Linienstrasse, Berlin.
"Die Falltür zur armen Welt", Speicher Mühlenstrasse, Berlin.
"absolvenz2", Das Städel, Frankfurt/a.M.

2000

"Vase", Fahrradhalle, Offenbach.

CATALOGUES

Andreas Baur (Hrsg.): "5000 Jahre Moderne Kunst. Painting, Smoking, Eating", Kat. Villa Merkel und Bahnwärterhaus, Galerien der Stadt Esslingen am Neckar", Esslingen 2008.

"Nach dem Beischlaf ist die Seele traurig. Lutz Braun, Thomas Schoeren, Klaus Winichner", Kat. CourtYard Gallery, Beijing 2007.

PERIODIKA / PERIODICALS

2016

Bettina Haiss: "Besprechung DC Open", in: Artblog Cologne, 10. September 2016.
Pablo Larios: "Critic's Guide: Dusseldorf & Cologne", in: frieze.com, 9. September 2016. Alexandra Wach: "Das Treffen der Matadoren", in: Welt / N24, 3. September 2016.
Reinhard Rakow: "Die Eintracht der Einzelgänger. Werke von Armin Boehm, Lutz Braun und Thomas Grötz in Oldenburg", in: Nord West Zeitung online, 11. Februar 2016.

2012

Silke Hohmann: "Unheimlich unordentlich", in: Monopol Nr 12/2013, Interpol, S. 36.

2008

"Lutz Braun", in: Intro, Nr. 158, März 2008, S. 8-9.
Oliver Tepel: "Großes Elend. Zwei Ausstellungen zum Thema Erwachsensein", in: Tagesspiegel, Nr. 19 811, 9. Februar 2008.
Gesine Borchert: "Ab dem 19. Jahrhundert geht es bei Lutz Brauns Berliner Ausstellung um Liebe, nicht Romantik", in: Monopol, Nr 1/2008 Januar, Preview, S. 116.

2006

N.N.: " Büro im Platenbau", in: Kunstforum, Bd. 180, Mai-Juni 2006, S. 214.

Karlheinz Schmid: "Alles in Bewegung. Von Mäusen und Menschen: Die 4. berlin biennale", in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Nr. 111, 13. Mai 2006, S.50.

Lisa Zeitz: "Bunte Zipfel, Farbexplosionen", in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung, 9. April 2006, Nr.14, S.66.

Harald Fricke: "Von Wölfen und Rehen", in: taz Kultur, 25. März 2006.

Sebastian Preuss: "Die Rache der VEB-Tapeten", in: Berliner Zeitung, 24. März 2006, Nr.71, S.25.