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## **Holger Bär**

### **ENGADIN**

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GALERIE

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Since the late 1980s, the German painter Holger Bär (from Wuppertal) has been employing machines developed by himself to paint his canvases. In recent years he has increasingly explored the color theories of Pointillism and has himself developed a Neo-Pointillist style, relying particularly on the principles of optical color mixing for rendering his paintings in oil or acrylic paint on canvas. In the exhibition "Engadin" he presents a selection from the Engadin project he has been working on the last years, painting the landscapes around St. Moritz, Switzerland, with particular reference to the painter Giovanni Segantini. In an essay on Holger Bär's Neo-Pointillism the critic Thorsten Ebeling writes the following:

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"The notion that in a painting the green of a tree is not actually green but a combination of yellow, blue and possibly even red dots is confusing. This evoked strong reactions when the Pointillist painters presented their works in the late 19th century. For artists like Seurat did not present their contemporaries with the familiar kind of paintings, but with something more like an assembly instructions, where the painting is created only by the unconscious activity of the human perception process. A tree painted by Seurat is quite obviously nothing but a shimmering accumulation of color dots. Thus, a transformation is taking place: small color dots are transformed into a painting. But where exactly does this transformation occur? Ultimately in the beholder—who thus becomes part of the painting's creation process. It is essentially about color theories and about scientific discoveries concerning perception. In the paintings of Seurat and of other Pointillists, however, it is not presented as an end in and of itself. The particular painting technique is rather used as a tool, it serves the realization of an artistic vision. The objective is to include the beholder of the Pointillist painting in what is going on in the painting. And to include him with the same intensity that the artist is experiencing in transforming reality into painting. The Pointillists are shifting the creation of the image into the mind of the beholder himself. It is his own process of perception that creates the image he is looking at, and does so over and over again.

Even though a Pointillist painting is based on color theories and on scientific insights on perception, the actual rendering was still done intuitively and on the basis of experience. Artists like Georges Seurat, Paul Signac and Henri Edmond Cross did not have the technical means offered by today's computers. Holger Bär has succeeded in delegating the production process of paintings to machines. He uses computers to translate images into program code, and to then again create images from this code. The ensuing next step is only logical: the paintings created in this manner follow the laws and techniques discovered by the Pointillists. This makes all the more sense since the paintings painted by his machines are composed of individual dots of paint. The Pointillist method of placing single dots of pure color can directly be incorporated in the workflow developed by Holger Bär since 1989. One hundred years after Seurat exhibited his first purely Pointillist painting, the painter Holger Bär has developed a comparable transformation."