A game of deception of abstract mirrors

At the Galerie Lesmeister abstract paintings by Henny Forster are on view. Jeremy Holmes is showing sculptures made of looping wood.

by Gabriele Mayer

REGENSBURG. Jenny Forster from Munich and Jeremy Holmes from New York present their works in a joint show for the third time at the Galerie Lesmeister. The monochromatic wooden panels by Holmes round out the contrasting color explosions and experiments by Jenny Forster. "Spiegel" - "Mirrors" is the title of Forster's current series. For her inaugural show at the Galerie Lesmeister she created a fantastic nature through cascades of color dashes, which turned out to be a show stopper in Regensburg. With her immaterial style of painting she suggests an illusion of different spaces on the surface of the image, i.e. landscapes. This time around she's cutting varied painted surfaces together like a collage and through that marries different techniques and effects of painting, lets them melt into each other and layers them. This technique is called "mixed media on paper and wood". The curtain rises for an irritable game of deception, which dares the viewer to sink into the depths of the image, but sometimes leads them astray, right into the mysterious, at the same time.

Let's take a closer look. An oval shape or a circle that can be interpreted as a mirror, is visible in the center of the image. In the history of art the depiction of mirrors in paintings has oftentimes served the artist himself by giving them a surface to portrait himself within the mirror, but also to simply enlarge the sceneries. But above all that, mirrors were to be seen as a metaphor for chicanery, the illusion which is a key point in illustrated paintings and serves as a means to create dialogue, but also to ironise. Jenny Forster's paintings don't show mirrors or reflections in their common sense, and neither can we make out figures or other shapes. But the large ovals or circles on the rectangular paintings suggest mirrors indeed - abstract mirrors.
Like in a distorted mirror

In every oval different accords of softly flowing and adventurously connecting colors pour into each other. These ovals are not strictly keeping the colors within their lines - they flow and burst past them as well. Some of them could even be interpreted as landscapes - seen trough the perspective of a bird, but especially as something fantastic, not-determinable. In sucks you in, particularly because all of the aspects within the paintings are connected with each other, like a multiply distorted mirror. When looking at the images from up close one can recognize that the ovals are cut outs and layered and onto the surface below, even though a look from the distance would suggest the opposite: again, an illusion, that, in a way, can be understood as the reflexion of close perception.

The series "Paravant" is showing mostly vertical shapes, that roam around wildly, are interlaced like shifted walls and spaces. Within this series, too does the artist expose the different layers of painting through a deceptive game. In a fantastic imagery like this, every paint stroke seems to have been added unwittingly, but still seems to magically connect with every other one, as if they influence each other. This demands one aspect especially: the whole of the painting must be coherent, even if broken up shapes are showing up everywhere and edge into the space as if one is surrounded by an unleashed kind of cubism.

Wood turns into lines within spaces

Jeremy Holmes uses white ash wood. He cuts the thin, 25 cm wide and very long lanes, treats the wood with water, bends the softened material and shapes it, as if they're merely paper streamers. The goal seems to be to surprise the viewer with meandering shapes of wood. Holmes grasps his arrangements as three dimensional lines, or lines within spaces, which open up spaces that make them look like a roller coaster. Typically, his works are presented on a pedestal. But one of these paper streamer-like landscapes made of wood that has been painted in black is mounted onto a wall much like a relief. An abstract sculpture or, if one focuses on the spaces between the bent object, an airy, almost moving interlacing of space.