

Matthias Dornfeld
„Donnerstag“
13.11. -19.12.2015
Galerie Jahn, Munich

Gravity's Rainbow –Everydays and Thursdays in the Paintings of Matthias Dornfeld

In days like these, we get so easily confused. We are bombarded with various types and kinds of information, asked to be available, happy-go-lucky and oh so very cool and fascinating 24/7, 365 days in a row. But we fail. To be precise, we fail because we are not, despite the colorfully manipulated lies that are scattered around us, free-floating, carefree and constantly gorgeous. We are what we are and we do, oh yes we do, feel gravity's pull. Hard and heavy. Rain, says the forecast, and very little shine is destined to and towards our mental horizons.

But what if, what if there could be a chance. What if it was possible to see, to feel and to be at one with the inevitable gravity so that, instead of getting us down and keeping us low, what if it would, in fact, do the every opposite? What if there is, against all the odds, a type of gravity that could send us out and up there, let us gain the freedom and pleasure of making and shaping the elements of surprises of the everyday - the everyday?

If and when there is such gravity, it has a name. It is called Gravity's Rainbow. And yes, it is a rainbow of a very special and unique sort. It is gravity's rainbow that goes down in order to get up and it feels kind of weird just because it is so splendidly intoxicating and righteous in all the right ways. Believe it or not, it turns dust to diamonds in the flick of a light.

It is exactly this version, this opening of gravity's rainbow that we are able to get and to stay close to, through the paintings of Matthias Dornfeld. In this place of give and take, of push and pull, we are confronted with a series of situated and committed works that take us for a ride in and through the emotions and motions of the everyday, and especially Thursdays.

With the works of Dornfeld, we don't gain access to the logic of a spectacle. Instead, we get a game of reversals. What seems down and out is with joy and celebration, funny and funky. And what seems, at the very first stance, a flirt with the strategies of naivety, is all of a sudden about something else. Rather than living on a cynical cul-de-sac, the doors swing open, wide open. It is a particular something else, which can be described as a painterly gesture, that allows that movement to happen in a moment, to take place and to become a visual narrative backed by a hesitant but self-confident attitude.

Here is an attitude that takes on a form without being formalistic. These are works that actively underline the essentials of what it means, well, nothing more and for sure, nothing less, than to be a pretty vacant and yet constantly present human being; someone who knows enough to not have any illusions of knowing that much. But what that person knows, instinctively and without any insecurities whatsoever, he/ she knows in and through daily experience.

It is those conflictual yet committed experiences, personal and collective, of everydays and Thursdays, that burn and heal, bite and caress, hug us and kick us – take us on a road trip and if we behave, if we manage to pay attention and get on it, go with the flow of images given to us through these works, this act might even return us to our very sender. But after the movement within a moment of seeing, the act of gaining distance and winning proximity, we are no longer what we were before. Something has gotten a hold of our hearts. And we start to dream for more, always for more.

It is a search that is as demanding as it is potentially rewarding. We get no fast and furious release; we get no satisfaction of enormous quantities and volume. We get the promise, the serious and substantial promise, that when having the courage to move off the safety-net and into the interaction, we are provided with room for surprises, new space for the ability and capability of both laughing at and laughing with ourselves. It is not rude or cruel, it is what it is – gravity's rainbow that certainly touches what's down below but just as certainly shines the light on to the whole spectrum of colors and its almost forbidden combinations.

Because? Because there is that chance of a dent, of an alternation of the rhymes and rhythms of watching and being watched. Just look, please take a closer look, for example, at the work with the lovely lady in her swimsuit, elegantly leaning on a surface that can be seen as a pool and having an afternoon rest. She is enjoying a rare moment just for herself, so to say. Her hair might be a mess, and the colors she carries are kind of a version of indoor fireworks, but nevertheless, or, in fact, just because of it, she radiates a power that is beyond its obvious connotations. She has a tail, and I assume you've noticed that. But this tail is, at the same time, much more and much less than meets our imagination. It shakes the tree that it feeds in such a way that it freezes while it boils.

What about that other work, that other painting next to it? A painting that pictures two figures in a relationship. The figure on the left can be seen as some kind of human upright form, and the figure to the right reminds us of a mushroom. But is it really that straightforward? Because what we sense is that in any second both of the figures are about to either grow in size or to get much smaller – or thinner, fatter, smarter or even crueler. Here is something about to happen – an accident or a wedding present? They might or might not swap their appearances – or they might do the dirty thing and disappear. It is a two-way proposal: dare me if you do, and don't dare if you can't face the consequences.

In all of these paintings, there is a convincing coherence, a train of thought of the painterly gesture. We can smell the melancholy rose, oh yes we can. And we can feel that sensual sad tenderness getting under our skin. But there is more to it, more as in the tiny details, more to the in-depth nuances, more to the exactness of doing the seemingly wrong thing in the most convincingly clear and clever way. This is not the beauty of the dysfunctional. This is much more important, much more extravagant. This is an upside down sensitivity, and when it runs, its feet are definitely not touching the ground. This is painting as it god damn should be. Alive and kicking, extrovert to the extreme and so very introspective that it's hilarious.

These are painterly gestures that certainly fool us but do not take us for fools. There are no cheap tricks, no flashy moves. No cute solutions, or promises of constructions of safe-havens. There is an astonishing variety of almost invisible but so very sensual invitations that are asking us to dance – to come out, get off the wall, stop being a wall-flower and get into the groove. The groove of that something, of a right now and right here, that we know is just about to disappear; that very attitude of striving and searching for what we never ever fully get, that gains its form and function by seeing-with, feeling-with and being with the everyday and especially the Thursdays of the paintings of Matthias Dornfeld.

Mika Hannula