

# PAINTING WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

UNFATHOMABLE REALMS OF COLOR OPEN COSMIC SPACES

For Nike Seifert, painting is a strong need, a kind of inner necessity. This passionate origin of her bold color compositions can be understood by drawing upon Kandinsky's essay "Painting as Pure Art", where art is the material expression of abstract content and the artist's emotions. Thus wrote Kandinsky in *Der Sturm* in 1913: "The choice of form is determined through inner necessity, which is substantially the only unalterable rule of art." Here the emotion is "a bridge from the non-material to the material (the artist) and from the material to the non-material (the viewer).

Emotion – feeling – work – feeling – emotion."

This immediate connection between emotion and feeling, as well as the relationship between artist and observer were, in his opinion, essential criteria for the newly emerging compositional painting style and thus the determining element for modern art. Even though the essence of painting, as an abstract composition from the beginning of modernism to

contemporary art, has developed many directions and forms of expression, Kandinsky's equation emotion – feeling – work – feeling – emotion remains unchanged until today.

## EXPERIMENT AND COINCIDENCE

The abstract works of Nike Seifert have not been subjected to the process of choosing a motif, but instead are created by carving something in a process-oriented way out of color and the painting procedure itself. With brush, squeegee, palette knife or just her bare hands, this artist from Cologne creates abstract visual worlds, textures, fields of color and surfaces. In doing so, she draws her inspiration from the pure act of painting which is at the same time motivation and goal. Coincidence and experiment pave the way, where experimenting, like a motor, continually leads her to inspirations for new compositions and layers of color. In doing so, additional techniques and applications arise

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CORRESPONDING EMOTION IN THE SOUL OF THE VIEWER.”

WASSILY KANDINSKY

which again lead to new forms, contours, and textures – arbitrarily and intuitively. For Nike Seifert, coincidence is an enormous source of inspiration. Here, on the spur of the moment and without rational filters, she can let her imagination freely run its course. In a way, the procedure of painting itself develops a momentum of its own and becomes the vehicle for immediate artistic expression. For Nike Seifert, this means relaxation and concentration, letting go and focussing.

Especially her spontaneous, gestural method of working recalls French Tachisme of the 1940s to 1960s, where the spontaneous act of painting was supposed to visualize the creative power hidden inside the artist. It also reminds us of the paintings of German Informalism of the 1950s which are expressions of the dynamic, spontaneous painting process. Nike Seifert connects the spontaneity of the painting process with a rich knowledge of the materials used which unfold their potential in a virtually alchemistic way.

#### **BALANCE BETWEEN INTUITION AND CALCULATION**

“When my pictures come into being, I don’t think of anything special. In any case, I never think about the picture itself, but rather let the picture guide me; I think about all sorts of things and reach for different colors and materials, almost as if I were remote-controlled. While doing so, the thoughts and feelings are very deep and strong, so that I actually sink down into them. At the same time, I observe how the picture develops and am forced to act, change and reject immediately.” In spontaneously developing abstract forms, Nike Seifert finds associative mental images that eventually lead her to the final composition: “That is my form of abstraction. At last, everything I am reflecting on finds its way onto the canvas, however detached from a previously clearly defined thought. Again and again, I am pushed to depart from what I successively see on the canvas. My thoughts as well as my feelings towards the particular picture do not stop until I sense a feeling of



View inside the studio: In many work steps, the mixtures are applied and taken down again with the most diverse range of tools.

'being finished'. Only then, do I feel a pleasant sense of calm inside of me."

### **COMING INTO EXISTENCE AND MORTALITY**

The creative process includes coming into being as well as dying. Layer for layer Nike Seifert adds pigments, oils, chalk and lacquer, one over the other, reworks, applies and solidifies. In the same way, she also takes these layers off again, paints them over, lets them disappear or changes them. She literally lets them grow and simultaneously also lets them disappear, if the moment calls for it. This multi-faceted and time-intensive work process is accompanied by thoughts and feelings that she has and feels while working: "The thoughts and feelings I have and feel during the creation process range from dying, downfall, powerlessness, pain, all the way to sprouting, hope, happiness, coming into existence and growth. However always in

this order; from something that is passing away, something can come to life. I find it difficult, if not impossible to perceive the beautiful, the powerful and the blossoming without the awareness of transiency. This certainly also applies to the artworks that are full of energy, strength and positivity. These aspects devoted to transiency are also present during the creation process of these pictures."

### **TITLES TAME ASSOCIATIONS**

Sometimes these abstract image worlds arisen in this fashion give the impression of expansive earthly landscapes all the way to cosmic universes. Likewise one seems to make out the outlines of something, often fragmented. For Nike Seifert these purely associative forms serve as a basis for the no less imaginative work titles. Syrinx, Andromeda, Rockstar, Chauvet or Yuanxiao; the



Experimental laboratory: The pigments are constantly combined in new ways and are mixed with different oils, glue and metals, among others.



list is almost infinite and opens further spiritual landscapes, astronomical worlds, melodies, light phenomena as well as an infinite number of forms from flora and fauna. For Nike Seifert, the titles are immanent to the work and constitute a verbal access to the birth of her abstract compositions. "I don't always find the titles right after completing the pictures, but rather with a certain delay in time. What I see in each finished picture awakens some new associations and feelings. Grasping these and giving them a name is actually quite difficult, because they are so multifaceted. In fact, the titles usually refer to real objects. Nevertheless the painted image remains pure abstraction. The viewer may possibly comprehend the titles and discover things that correspond to the title. For me, giving the work a title is similar to taming it. The flood of feelings and thoughts or better their intensity becomes something tangible this way.

## MEDITATION AND TRANSCENDENCE

These figurative associations in her pictures and titles certainly also reflect reminiscences of her own personal memories and emotions, which are always strongly shaped by music and a profound artistic sensibility. Thus among other things, music, in analogy to tone color, composition or rhythm plays a big role. Her pictures, too, can equally be loud and/or quiet; can correspond to an adagio or a presto. Yet here the meaning of music, as an experience that is perceived through the senses, goes a little further: "Music and painting are sensual in a similar manner, addressing the soul as well as the imagination," describes Nike Seifert her artistic approach to painting. "Especially in music, you can reach this meditative level. Once, while making music when I was about 10 years old, I felt this very special sensation for the first time - this "going beyond" or "climbing over" an emotional-mental state. This was a very profound,

“ART TAKES US TO THE CORE OF OUR INNER BEING,  
BUT IT ALSO OPENS OUR VIEW ONTO THE BIG PICTURE.”

though undefined feeling, at times intoxicating and at times melancholy, yet in any case intensive and exhausting. The artist, who also masters the art of gilding, connects these intensive and emotional “strands” in her work with the boundaries of the imaginable.

#### **PAINTING OFFERS ROOM FOR REFLECTION**

For Nike Seifert, painting is consequently not only a window to her imagination, but also the artistic attempt to formulate existential questions: “Whether in thoughts, in music or also in artistic creativity – it feels good, when you give your own imagination plenty of room and you try to move beyond the limited realm of experience. Not only the creative process itself, but also the result in the form of a finished painting can take us there and

is able to evoke moods and associations that were previously hidden inside of us.”

Beside these diverse emotions and spiritual-sensual associations there are often profound inner longings that are mirrored in Nike Seifert’s pictures, in that they open planes of reflection and projection for the viewer. With her work series LUMINOUS ENERGY, BLOSSOM TIME, COLOUR CONCEPTIONS and CHROMATIC FRAGMENTS, she takes us into the world of our own mind and our power of imagination. With this she gives us imaginary spaces that are just as infinite and boundless as painting itself. ■

