

Colored Frost

When considering the exhibition title 'View and Plan of Toledo' in accompaniment with the work of Thomas Scheibitz, one quickly reaches the point of asking, is the artist a trailblazer or a trapper. Moving through Scheibitz's landscapes, one senses how El Greco could interest him. It is the unbroken merging of plane areas in expanding depth of field growing out of the horizon. *View and Plan of Toledo*, ca. 1609, by blending a static geographical element with a panorama of the city, expands from the plane framework to the depth of natural space serving as an emblematic allegory for the cycle of life.

Scheibitz controls our vision with the interplay between a birds-eye perspective and a subsequent frontal view. One should honor the chosen allied relationships to El Greco in a footnote introduction and rather refer to a parallel to computer animation illustrated in the projected architecture. This belongs to a standard approach, closing in on an object or plan from a height, then sinking the viewpoint, subsequently shifting past the foreground to a complete view, and then finally reaching the opposite viewpoint. One is also acquainted with the synergy of depth of field and frontal perspective from picture books, when in the moment that the sheets and the related cutout elements rise up to form a background. Scheibitz's architecture and urban scenes appear like a colored cardboard world pieced together, where the right angle granting stability is added through a folding process only roughly. Roads and fields in the background are reminiscent of a parlor game board while the sky is equivalent to a multicolored, patchwork set of blinds.

Scheibitz also focusses on cross sectional views. Floral elements seem freeze-dried and appear similar to an ice bloom rendered in an area. Here the remark must follow that even snowmen emerge occasionally in Scheibitz's picture panoramas. One is able to perceive deep layers on the basis of differentiated color injections. In other apparent cross sections, one is reminded of a sliced Club Sandwich.

Scheibitz's paintings are built linearly, without the brush strokes seeming to be subdued. Truly hard-edged zones constantly dominate fields with color diffusion. Sometimes it looks as if Scheibitz wanted to make sure of himself through doubling up on the guiding lines. Similarly at these points the melting of the colors is intensified and harkens back to the creamy applications of American pop artist Wayne Thiebaud. Scheibitz also trusts the line by the malleable interior differentiation of the color fields. Horizontal layers of different color intensity or, more recently, web structures, emerging with the use of felt pens, add volume, light and shadow as differentiation of material. These are altogether means to pictorially charged structures that, showing a relative comic range, create a visual Esperanto in the area of form differentiation and expression modulation. In the interplay of the linear structures and the underlying order of pictorial components, from the return of personally articulated profiles opposite pressed-out forms, Scheibitz's work recalls that of Richard Mortensen from the 1960's and 70's. Michel Seuphor described this organic combination of linear and pictorial components as follows: "When one form encounters another, it's not

necessary that they struggle with each other. They can discover each other. They can also find something together, which surprises them in the routines and so enriches them." While Mortensen applied the pure pigment, Scheibitz's palette is diluted. It's the colors of plastic toys that were used on the beach all summer, where the sun and saltwater have faded the pigments. Or – it is like a glass, wanting to appear half full and half empty at the same time – one is willing to see everything under a counterfeit-colored foil, even though it will protect the basic colors from unintentional changing and growing pale.

Within a recent period, Scheibitz has set back the panorama, where view and plan are meeting, to the convenience of the conception found in the emblematic condensation of the painting. The analytically compressed strokes lead to horizontally stretched formats, where architecture is filigreed to Mikado-imprisoned construction elements that themselves are the score – close to a scripted as well as musical notation picture. This appears, in an arresting manner in the painting *Schaufenster/Shop Window*, 1998. On the frontal plane, peeled off from an acute-angled triangular space, three letters prance next to each other. The effectively interlocking letters seem to drift as though unable to get a fix on a line. A picture window presents many possibilities.

Scheibitz conceives of letters and their sequence as items, which result in an overall view. This form of typography has the unruly quality of subordinating itself to no kind of formalizing. Even the three 'E's' from the signature 'Low Sweetie', from the catalogue of the same title, refuse consonance and are themselves recognized at best in a family relationship. Language stamps out reality. This stamping out process coagulates into writing, which – with all sensitivity in the correspondence of a content statement and typographic means of transmission – keeps the message packed in a foil. The fields between the stamping out remain unarticulated in the language. Even though Scheibitz hollows out letters from non-letter

forms, they remain components of a structure. Even if it sounds paradoxical, Scheibitz's alphabets seem closer to a prelinguistic status than to the relationship between word and object endeavouring towards clarity, in which the becoming self still absorbs the environment through its pores and exists in a permanent diffusion between the self and outer world.

It is all too consequent that this process of the hollowing out of forms in the painting finds its continuation in the three-dimensional world. For the exhibition, Scheibitz created three sculptures, which realize forms of the crystalline and the 'as-if letters' spatially. The components, put together from medium-density fibreboards, and to which Scheibitz gives a scenic stroke, oppose a tectonically precise form. So also all terms, that assign themselves to a comparable field, desire to glide on their curves. They arrange a multiplicity of views, which distinguish for us the appropriate plan as being without hierarchy. The three-dimensional potential in Scheibitz' paintings found its concrete realization here. The body, with its ship-like shape, lets us think again of something frosty; when the icy wind cuts dissecting forms from that voluminous upward-piling snow, and sharpness and softness come to an accord.

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