

## **“astonishing me”**

“Homelessness is based on the loneliness of being.” Georg Gaigl’s “decalcages” may bring this dictum of Martin Heidegger to mind. However, Gaigl doesn’t see himself as a documentalist of homelessness, but searches for whereabouts of being - his world of ideas – in a world of generalized images. The waste products of the media society – photo-copies, magazine cut-outs, video stills and computer-generated images – are the main sources in his search. The central themes in Gaigl’s pictures are the “soft facts” - the thoughts, the awareness of life and the emotions of the individual. In condensing the essential, single figures become the bearers of this world of ideas, which forms the basis of the conceptual system of his art.

Zoomed up to a portrait format, figures are placed at the edges of the picture and almost vanish from the line of action. The gestures of pain, sadness and withdrawal display the inner life of the actors, amplified by the “lack of perspective” in the background. Focussed on their emotional conditions, the figures are related to text modules, which can on one hand be understood as the artist’s opinion, and on the other hand, as the ignition of new areas of association for the viewer. The words appear from the abstract background and are therefore rather a part of the pictorial composition than simple elements of communication. The figures and their gestures seem to merge with the expressive colouring of the undefined space. Nevertheless, the associative character of the colour of these surreal landscape-fragments reinforces the semantic significance of the actors. Through the interaction of gesture and text, Gaigl expresses the violability, alienation, yearning and anchoring of the individual. To round off this imagination, he breaks open the surface by processing the picture, causing cracks and holes - violations which do not even spare the figures.

If the individuals in his early pictures appear to have the possibility of acting out their emotions in the dreamlike-abstract world, in his new pictures these possibilities are removed. The figures withdraw, become small in a cloudy atmosphere without perspective. Their gestures are reduced and their attitudes demonstrate a withdrawal into themselves. In his new works, Gaigl widens the pictorial speech of his pictures by means of views of cities and landscapes. The human being is lost in civilisation, becomes a foreign body. These are backdrops which can be replaced at any time and which clarify the phenomenon of globalisation. Wherever humans are found, their surroundings and problems are the same the world over. The scenes of cities and landscapes become the bearers of moods, and projections of single fragments of life. The texts are now clearly structured at the edge of the picture and have the function of subtitles to the figures and scenery. Linked in this way they develop a new form of expression.

Gaigl’s pictures have developed from images of powerful gestures and colours to those of disquieting, familiar landscapes in pastel colours; in which the withdrawn individual is threatened by his existential environment. His new works are reflections on globalisation. They are icons of the cocooning-tendencies in our society.

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