

MYTHICAL PAINTING [MYTHISCHE MALEREI]

di Heiner Hachmeister

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Presentazione della mostra personale "Konstellationen", Hachmeister Galerie, Münster

The only materials used by the Italian painter and draftsman Simone Pellegrini (born in Ancona in 1972) are paper and oiled charcoal. The paper is always the same and is of a type that has been manufactured for more than five hundred years. In the fifteenth century it was used by Italian Old Masters to transfer preliminary studies for frescos onto walls. For Pellegrini, this paper is both the ground for his painting and an instrument for transferring individual figurations – all of which together make up the actual painting onto the support. This is a laborious process, especially when it comes to large-format pictures, as he sometimes paints individual elements on hundreds of smaller paper fragments, which he then rubs onto larger paper, one after the next. This process, similar to monotype, has formal, aesthetic significance as well as contextual meaning for Pellegrini. For one, lines and volumes acquire a fragile transparency that actually deprive the figures, plants, animals, and landscape elements of their own expressivity; for another, they take on a "typological" form. The pictorial narrative is defined by the ritual repetition of the monotype painting style; its space/time dimension assumes an absolute, symbolic character, similar to the images produced in Mesopotamian or Egyptian cultures.

Pellegrini's mysterious, mythical creatures are deindividualized; they appear in nearly the same poses and formations. Natural elements are reduced to decorative patterns: trees become schematic visions, and water, writhing signs. Everything is flat, without any attempt to depict perspective, similar to a map.

The color scheme is also always the same the yellow of the paper, the black of the image with a little red, which is always associated with either fire or blood. Looking at the individual figurations and natural elements on their own, their typology and delicate coloration make them seem as if they originated in antiquity, although the overall concept assumes an abstract character that is supported by individual, now literally abstract, larger formal elements. Pellegrini's paper pictures are utterly contemporary, but their mythical atmosphere – unlike that of his New Figuration colleagues – is created by drawing an analogy between his own cultural horizon and the works of very early advanced civilizations.

Simone Pellegrini studied at the art academy in Urbino, lives in Bologna, and teaches at the art academy there. He exhibits in many Italian institutions and galleries and also cooperates with one gallery each in Vienna, London, New York, Paris, and Münster. Pellegrini has been working with the Hachmeister Galerie in Münster since 2006.

In 2022 and 2023 Simone Pellegrini will be represented in two museum exhibitions in Austria and Italy: first, the Museum Gugging Klosterneuburg, near Vienna, is showing masterpieces of Art Brut under the title "Brut Favorites! Feilacher's Choice" until March 5, 2023, which also includes a monumental work Pellegrini created especially for this exhibition. Second, the show "L'Arte Inquieta" from November 18, 2022, to March 12, 2023, at the Palazzo Magnani in Reggio Emilia will feature works by artists such as Paul Klee, Asger Jorn, Anselm Kiefer, Alberto Giacometti, Keith Haring, Karel Appel, Alighiero Boetti, and Simone Pellegrini.