

ANGELEHNT Ausstellung im KUNSTPARTERRE mit Arbeiten von
Antonio Calderara sowie Carla Arocha / Stéphane Schraenen

Gespräch von Carla Arocha (C.A.), Stéphane Schraenen (St.SCH.), Rupert Walser (R.W.) und Harald Spengler (H.S.) zur Eröffnung am 17. Dezember 2016

H.S.

Dear Friends, dear Carla, dear Stéphane, lieber Herr Walser, thank you to Carla and Stéphane for this wonderful exhibition. For the radiant works of Calderara.

We had been toying with the idea of showing Antonio Calderara works for quite a while, but as I wanted something more than a straightforward exhibition with one painting after the other on the wall - bing, bing, bing - I felt there was something missing. But I had no idea as to what this something might be, or as to which artist it might be, who could deliver it. And then, at the Art Fair in Madrid this February, Isabella Czarnowska had a wonderful booth with works on paper as well as two sculptures by Carla and Stéphane. And I knew immediately: here lies the clue to our show. In fact, I had seen your piece at the Wallace Collection some years before, but at that point I knew nothing about you the artists. And so we arranged to meet: you came to Munich and spent two days in this house, and we started to develop the idea for this exhibition.

The title "Angelehnt" came from you. Tell us about that.

St.Sch.

ANGELEHNT is the first word of German I had to learn at school and the idea first came, I think, because of the relations in the overlapping way of working of Calderara and how we function. This kind of space, this small gap between representation and abstraction.

C.A.

Because it was so present in the work of Calderara.

St.Sch.

Yes, asolutely. Yes, and also the first drawing that I saw of him, was these two houses with this spirit, with this space in between and I think there was one thing to do, leave kind of this door open between what he does and we do.

C.A.

We spent a great deal of time discussing the title.

St.Sch.

Yes, because we had another title, but that was apparently already used so many times, so we had two kinds of, so that was "Between" or "In Between". So we had to make an exercise to try to find something other

H.S.

"ANGELEHNT" in German is a door that is neither closed nor open, just like the sculpture FLUTTER that you created for this show.

C.A.

It works physically but it also works mentally. It is the little gap as a door is left ajar.

H.S.

When I think about those two sculptures in Madrid, it occurs to me that they were, in cross section, a square, and that the plates or elements used were also squares. Here you use rectangular forms, and the cross section of the sculpture is also a rectangle. Is there a deliberate connection?

St.Sch.

There is often a relationship to the size or the proportion of the piece in the segments of the piece. In this case it was obvious, that we will enclose these two pillars.

C.A.

We also considered the idea of enclosing them separately, but that will not make any sense.

St.Sch.

And also, what we really liked here, was the idea, we were working in relation with the space. I think, this also happens in the work of Calderara, it's really about space, also about the in between space or the void and the full. And I think, that what we really liked also is the thought that were in the house, that was an installation by Anke Doberauer, to create more disorientation also we included the colours, the pistachio and the orange, they're included in our piece to create even more sense of disorientation.

C.A.

In the work of Calderara it is local space and we relate more to a nomadic space.

St.Sch.

We are in relation to the space we work in, but the works about the space that he lived, that surrounded him.

R.W.

Maybe that's the right time for me to join. I'm very interested in that period when Calderara moved from figurative painting to abstract painting. You can observe this very well in these two portraits of his wife Carmela. One little fact in this painting on the right is very astonishing, which was painted about ten years later. Everything is almost flat, no more illusion of volume, space. And already quite monochrome, close to one colour. At that time, by and by, the support, the board comes up, just one millimeter out of the flat surface. It emerges into the real space. A kind of frame around, a real part of the wooden plate, stays one millimeter back. It is the former so called "passe-partout", which is normally above of the painted area. Here, this "frame" which is still part of the painting, is shifted back. (By the way, one can even find some later paintings of Calderara, in which he really painted a kind of frame on or in his paintings). Calderara did a slow but big step to the abstract world about five years later. In 1959/60 his paintings finally arrived definitely in the real space as a real object. It's very nice and interesting to see this phenomenon in this exhibition next to these pieces of young artists. These works are playing with reality and illusion, with spatial reality and, at the same time, illusional space. I think, Antonio would have enjoyed that a lot. Quite funny in this context are these two frames of the Galerie Thomas. It's like a funny game.

C.A.

I guess, it's interesting to see those things. They are based on 2D images, so we try to use whatever technology in order to bring the flat image to the treshold, where it functions between 2D and 3D.

S.Sch.

This one I mean, it's one of a serie which is called "Up", because basically, they are all photographs of corners in rooms, like this one actually is one of the pillars in the house. And the idea is to bring this kind of mundane thing, that you don't normally look at, to bring that to a certain point of abstraction, but what is interesting to see, that a lot of people see this afterwards, you see them starting looking differently at the space. That, it becomes really part of a really space different reviewed.

R.W.

Yes, I think, that Calderara would like to visit this show.

H.S.

Herr Walser, Sie haben doch Antonio Calderara noch kennengelernt?

R.W.

Ja, ich hatte vorher Zeit nachzudenken, es ist ziemlich genau 40 Jahre her, also 1976. Zu dieser Zeit war ich noch Kunststudent und gleichzeitig Kunstgeschichtestudent. Als Job habe ich in meinem Atelier für mich, aber auch für andere Siebdruck gemacht, unter anderem auch für Fruhtrunk oder für Rupprecht Geiger. Da kam jemand zu mir und fragte: "Traust du dir zu, Calderara zu drucken?" Ich hab gesagt: "Ja, natürlich", hatte keine Ahnung, was der macht. Ich durfte dann ein kleines Aquarell, das ich als Vorlage bekommen habe, drucken. Dies hängt jetzt da draußen, an der Teeküche. Mit diesem Probedruck fuhr ich zu Calderara und wurde dort sehr herzlich begrüßt und aufgenommen, wie Calderara das mit allen jungen Menschen und Künstlern gemacht hat. Calderara was very friendly to young artists, had this still existing huge collection, big parts are shown in Lugano at the moment. Da habe ich ihn kennengelernt, wurde begrüßt von einem kleinen Dackel namens Kim. Ich habe immer versucht, ihnen klar zu machen, dass Kim(m) auf bayrisch "Komm her" heißt. Es war richtig herzlich, wunderbar, still, bescheiden, ganz einfach von ganz großem Herzen. Ich durfte dann seine letzten beiden Editionen drucken und verlegen, wir haben diese in enger Zusammenarbeit konzipiert. Er hat sehr gerne Siebdruck-Serien für eine Mappe gemacht, davon gibt es ungefähr vierzig bis fünfzig. In der Folge war ich noch einige Male bei Calderara und auf meiner 1. Basler Messe 1978 habe ich eine seiner Mappen in einem sehr kleinen Galerie-Stand gehängt und erhielt viel Aufmerksamkeit.

H.S.

Wir zeigen in der Ausstellung exemplarisch, wie sich Calderaras Malerei entwickelte, von den frühen zu den späten Arbeiten. Die früheste hier aus den 20er Jahren. Dann hat es dies Doppelbild mit Blick auf den Orta-See, aus den 30er Jahren. Da habe ich das Gefühl, er stellt eine Lichtsituation dar. Und später dieses Bild mit der Figurengruppe aus den 50er Jahren. Wenn ich da drauf schaue, denke ich immer an die italienische Renaissance, Herr Walser.

R.W.

Ja, das war etwas, was er mir gleich am Anfang gesagt hat, ich war ja selbst Künstler und Kunstgeschichtestudent: Du musst dir Piero anschauen, das ist der Anfang. Also Piero della Francesca ist sein ganz großes Vorbild gewesen, an dem er sich orientiert hat. Ich bin das dann auch abgefahren

und war sehr glücklich, dass ich das alles gesehen habe. In Arezzo konnte man noch direkt an die Fresken herangehen. Ich bin der Meinung, nicht nur wegen der sehr traumhaften und innigen Stimmung in den Bildern von Piero della Francesca, auch nicht nur wegen der Farbtönung oder wegen des Lichts, sondern vor allem wegen der Farbmaterie ist Piero ein sehr großes Vorbild, ja eine Orientierung für Calderara gewesen. Auch wegen der Stille, die da in diesem Werk hier der Fall ist.

Zum Thema Farbe würde ich auch sagen, die Gegenständlichen sind noch relativ pastos gemalt, man sieht auch den Pinselstrich. Man liest immer wieder, dass die späten Calderara in sehr vielen Schichten gemalt sind und dann wieder fein abgeschliffen, wieder eine Schicht drauf, fein abgeschliffen, was natürlich die Lasurmalerei der Renaissance hauptsächlich auch macht. Aber ich glaube, dass noch viel mehr das Fresko eigentlich seine Vorstellung ist: dass die Farbe also in der Wand und in der Materie drin ist, aber trotzdem präsent ist. Und da kommt vielleicht der Punkt des Lichtes. Licht ist, das sieht man auch wieder sehr gut an diesen beiden Bildern, ja erst mal Quelle räumlich etwas darzustellen: Licht kommt von links oben, deswegen ist auf der einen Seite hell, auf der anderen Seite dunkel, deswegen sieht es plastisch aus, was im nächsten kleinen Bild daneben gar nicht mehr der Fall ist. Er verzichtet auf Plastizität und macht nur mehr Flächen. Licht hat also nicht mehr zu dienen um eine Illusion zu erzeugen, sondern darf selbst Licht sein. Bei einem Fresko ist das ganz wunderbar, weil die Farbe mit dem Putz eine Einheit eingeht. Auf der Wand ist sozusagen eine matte Glasur. Das versucht er meines Erachtens in den späteren Bildern. Dort haben wir ein wunderbares Übergangsbild, das ist sicher 1956/57. Das daneben auch, das ist wahrscheinlich 1958. Da sehen Sie schon sehr, dass Licht selbst Licht sein darf. Farbige Licht. Wo die Farbe eindringt und dann wieder durch die Farbe zurück reflektiert auf unsere Augen trifft. Diese Lichtstimmung ist für Calderara sehr sehr wichtig. Man muss sich vorstellen, dreißig, vierzig Jahre hat er figurativ gemalt und im Alter von fast 60 ist er plötzlich international weltberühmt geworden. Eine verrückte Karriere. Es ist unglaublich, acht Jahre später war er mit zwölf Bildern auf der Documenta, zusammen mit Judd, der ihn übrigens sehr geschätzt hat. Aber da wird diese dunstige Nebel-Licht-Angelegenheit ja noch richtig illusionistisch geradezu erzeugt, während dann Licht nur mehr aus Farbe selbst entsteht, und nicht mehr eine Illusion, eine Erzählung des Lichtes.

H.S.

Es wird ein sehr konsequenter Entwicklungsprozess sichtbar. Ich würde sagen Calderara "minimalisiert" dabei mehr und mehr das Motiv. Und auch die Farben verändern sich.

Wir haben uns erlaubt zwischen die späten Aquarelle von Calderara zwei Arbeiten von Carla und Stéphane zu hängen. Works by you, Carla and Stéphane. Can you tell us something about these paperworks? I have seen them first time this beginning year in Madrid.

St. Sch.

What he said before, for him the later work of Calderara is not so much abstract, but more like minimal, I think (Carla agrees). For us, that seems the consideration to work on it. When we made the first series of drawings like a couple of years ago at Thomas Gallery, they were totally abstract

patterns, that looked very similar, but they were all looking they were the same temper. When we show those drawings, the idea was more to make them, when we showed them the first time more like portraiture. There were a couple of them, they were in dark blue and black, they were purple and green and they looked either like swatches of wallpaper or like old houses or something, but the way we presented them, they were more like you have family portraitures, like the two, that are next the toilet, it's not so both, boy and girl, because it's kind like these family portraits, so they have a relation to representation in that way.

C.A.

The first one of that series has a name, the name of a dear friend who passed away a few years ago ... the others are titled 'in blue and yellow' or 'in green and purple' as if someone were wearing throes colours. With that first series we were also interested to give the illusion of perfect regularity but as one inspect further, one realises that lines are not straight, the squares are all different, very much an in between perfect regularity and imperfection.

With that series came the idea, that they bring the illusion, that they were perfect. When you try to look at them it's all completely off. So they are in between of perfection and imperfection.

St.Sch.

And like the one, that is hanging next the relief at the stairs, the serie is called "View" an that's the one, that you saw at the Arco, so the idea, the sculpture, we called them carousels, like the kind of merry-go-rounds, and the drawings were, they are not actually fused with, as if you have this kind of distorted chaotic view, when you start turning around, so they have a concentrical idea of representation of a totally abstraction.

The title of the installation is called FLUTTER, and flutter would be in a music or aerodynamics this kind of constant state of flux, in nervous disorientation, kind of palpitation,

C.A.

like the movement of the butterfly wings ...

St.Sch.

that's also what you see, when you look at the piece, it's never the same, it's constantly changing, depends on the light or where you stand or how you look at it. ... You can't really focus on it.

H.S.

Thank you very much, to you all.