

Text for the exhibition 09.10. to 13.11.2020, Retroperspektiven, Contemporary Gallery CH

The art of the Bern-based painter Alfred Dam is focused on clarity, an all-encompassing snapshot of the inner and outer cosmos. Dam finds his means of representation in abstraction and especially in the use of the color blue. A dark, deep blue opens up to the viewer, which is reminiscent of these monochrome works by Yves Klein through this coloring. Because in the words of Dam the blue is "like the sky, like the infinity". The pioneering series INBETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH, since 1995, plays with the symbiosis of color and the found objects of his numerous journeys. Shards, sand, earth, blades of grass, feathers and leaves serve on a painting surface in the sign of nature. The narrow lines in gold and silver symbolize the center of heaven and earth into which man is born. The study of ancient languages, long journeys to foreign cultural areas, observation of nature and deep engagement with religion and philosophy are the creative foundation of the Austrian-born artist. His work sees itself as a study of the inner and outer environment. For Alfred Dam, people are surrounded by light and dark, which is reflected in his series COSMIC DANCE, CHANGES and MUDH from 1998 to 2009. It is about a "path into the uncertain breadth and depth in oneself". Within the path, the person is accompanied by changes, CHANGES, which lead to reflection and imagination, MUDH, of oneself. The people, like the stars, move in the cosmic dance, COSMIC DANCE. The color blue expresses this meaningful process:

Alfred Dam's artist position on the confrontation with the question of what a good artist is and in what way "The Importance of Being Artist" is expressed in his work, in his thinking and being.

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The Importance of Being Artist

Shudders, throbbing of hair, agitation, tingling, pausing, questions, thinking, not thinking, all of these can trigger good art. Good art does not have to provide an answer or a solution, it can even be completely unintentional and only enrich life with an outstanding intuition that is familiar and everyday. The recognition and the successful expression of this intuition defines the quality of a work of art, whereby the knowledge of the content-changeable values and the intention of the artist may take a backseat. Art is an unforeseen event outside of our rational concepts of time. Where time stands still or dissolves, art takes its place. The sublime is now, writes Barnett Newmann in his essay "The Sublime is now". Just as any good communication comes about with the use of a language, art also depends on the use of its language. That is why you can only define good art if you understand the language of the artist and the intuition in his work. I see the task and importance of being an artist in this process of new learning and recognition, the passing on of what has been recognized, the attempt to make the not-knowing, the known and the representable tangible with the help of intuition.

Alfred Dam, 2007