

THE DEADLY LEAP OF THE BUTTERFLY

ALDO CRISTOFARO

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A Firework of Colours

For Aldo Cristofaro, colours are like the ingredients for a creative dish or like the notes of a classical composition. His paintings, however, are created without a recipe or a sheet of music. With each new canvas, he confronts the ever-changing challenge and process of layering, drawing, painting, dabbing, dripping and interweaving, colour after colour. To do this, he almost always starts with two individual colours, which he places without any idea of the finished picture, as a surface, line or structure. The type and consistency of the paint also play a role; he uses oil paints, acrylic paints, vinyl paints or different chalks on the same canvas, in each case also to vary the effect of light refraction, the gloss or the depth. Depending on the choice, the last work step has to dry first, to settle, before the next one can follow. In the meantime, he continues working on another canvas.

The composition is in the foreground for Cristofaro. What should come to the front, what should go to the back, what dynamics should emerge? Each new colour, form and duct brings a shift, changes the mood. Intuitively, but anything but randomly, brushstroke follows brushstroke. To the music in the background, Cristofaro moves around the entire painting in the process of painting, sounding out the emerging melody of the elements. Pattern structures, colour combinations, shapes, breaks, irregularities - the formal combines with sensual impressions to create vibrating colour landscapes. At the same time, the degree of abstraction in his paintings has continued to grow over the years. As in music, things like dynamics and articulation are central, but they are secondary parameters that are not fixed, but result in empty spaces for the interpreter. In Cristofaro's paintings, this space is part of the work. Objects or sensory impressions only arise in individual perception; they are to be filled in by the interpreter.

In the process, concrete colour plays a subordinate role in Cristofaro's work; in the sense of formal composition, it is a matter of ordering principles and contrasts such as symmetry or asymmetry, grouping or scattering, dynamics or statics, rhythm, centre of gravity and counterpoint. This gives rise to an atmospheric spatiality as already formulated by Wassily Kandinsky for abstraction. But this is more about pop than about spiritual penetration. Detached from fixed meanings, colour is a means that only achieves its effect in context. It is only the environment that makes it appear aggressive, quiet, pushing forward or restrained.

It is precisely the association with metropolitan landscapes, their movements and colours, that is not accidental in Cristofaro's colourful paintings. The painter often walks for hours through the city, past inhospitable places, graffiti, dirty backyards, neon signs, accompanied by the sounds and smells of the big city, the roar of goods trains, clattering metal or screeching cats. The sensory impressions gathered here consciously and unconsciously shine through in the pictures and even more explicitly in their titles. They usually arrive first in the finished pictures - associative constructions that create urban scenes in the mind's eye. And yet, the depictions do not seem like abstracted cityscapes. Cristofaro's worlds emerge from the sum of impressions and the respective interplay of colours. This goes beyond the intellectually controlled work of the earliest abstractions of a Kandinsky just as much as it goes beyond an abstract expressionism as characterised by the works of Joan Mitchell. Both exhibit formal similarities. But Cristofaro's work combines very fresh and thoroughly trendy colours and forms that seem to feed on inner and outer impressions and grow as formal parameters into futuristically moving and sensual compositions.

Dr Nicola Schröder (Zurich)

Öffnungszeiten: Tue, Thu, Fri, Sat after prior tel. registration