



Jan 17 – Feb 28, 2015

Patrick Rohner: „Landmannalaugar“ – Opening New Worlds

With “Landmannalaugar,” Zurich’s Galerie Mark Müller is hosting what is already Patrick Rohner’s seventh solo show at the gallery since 1996. This exhibition combines current works in various techniques with small-format oil paintings from earlier creative periods that are lined up frieze-like in the gallery’s main space in chronological order. This conceptual and, in a sense, retrospective presentation provides the beholder with an overview of the entire universe of Patrick Rohner’s oeuvre, with its three decisive steps of development. From the early works, which build up on countless layers of paint and emphasize their surface structure, to works dominated by contrasting, intense worlds of colour, to the work of recent years, where an increasingly powerful, associative context manifests itself in the visual language.

The title of the exhibition can be traced back to the artist’s stay in Iceland in the summer of 2014. As a result of Iceland’s make up, the artist found virtually ideal conditions for his geological-scientific interest in landscapes. There are but few places on earth where the earth’s history and the formational processes and forces that shape the appearance of our planet can be experienced and understood so directly. The impressions and experiences have led to an additional substantial condensation of various steps of perception and work that run through all his works during the process of creation.

Various lines of exploration come together in Patrick Rohner’s basically conceptual understanding of art (only without the rigor and sensual sobriety of conceptual art). During his tours and in the photographs that emerge during them, the intense engagement with scientific-geological literature, and the history of landscape painting, as well as in his curiosity and joy of experimentation with new media and techniques, there is a comprehensive understanding of the make up of the landscape that surrounds him. This profound understanding allows Patrick Rohner to recognize processes taking place in nature, to reveal them and to transfer them to an adequate visual language allowing him to formulate a generally valid statement without having to follow an illustrative or descriptive reproduction of the perceived.

There is something quite fundamental that manifests itself in Patrick Rohner’s work: from the perspective of a conventional, narrative structure and attitude of expectation, when engaging with these images the beholder is confronted with an unstable, processual present: a present, that recreates itself constantly, with dynamic layers that are linked to one another and exponentiate, with a materiality that generates a directness and reality and that goes beyond all illustrative realism, a content of illusion that creates new references to the known. How do we experience our “world” or “realities?” How do subjective experience and knowledge correspond with objectively secure values?

Instead of a classical understanding of nature, Patrick Rohner is interested in the insight that the forces that are manifest in the structures of paint and layers of an image and that organize the image as an image, similar to nature, that organize it as such. The images or the art itself are not merely mimetic. Image and art are themselves nature and insert themselves in the natural order of things.

Finally these images are about an ability to differentiate and the capacity to offer a thematic statement and significance, that expands, and on another layer points to



sensual and intellectual perception, to enrich our knowledge and experience of the world with new things. These images thus open new spaces of vision and thought, fields of possibility that generate an increase in knowledge and new findings which the beholder experiences in the here and now. To close with a quotation of the Danish artist Per Kirkeby: "There are pictures it's difficult to say something about because they possess such an extraordinary amount of presentness." (Per Kirkeby: "Bravura," 1984)

Dr. Invar-Torre Hollaus, Basel, January 2015
Trans. Brian Currid