

Krobath gallery presents new works by Ugo Rondinone, which explore issues such as painting and its iconography and conceptual impact. Inspired by traditional panel paintings, Rondinone also examines instances of sculpture and their referential mechanisms in the context of art history. The exhibition features six paintings of clouds, each entitled with the date on which they were created. The outlines of the paintings correspond to the shape of the clouds and are reminiscent of the dramaturgy of altar-like scenarios. With dates as their titles, these works can be ranked among a larger series of works, which includes Rondinone's trademark circle and stripe paintings, ink drawings and stars and night sky tableaux.

Rondinone's complex artistic vocabulary draws on a wide range of semiotic codes and materials, which produce a variety of language concepts, translating them into a visual matrix. His works often evoke a slowing down of everyday life by introducing a contemplative moment into each exhibition and constructing poetic contexts. By dating the works, the artist is putting them in chronological order, almost as if he were cataloguing them or creating journal entries. At the same time, the space in the paintings – and/or the space in general – interrelates with the titles of the paintings.

Clouds as a motif can be traced back through the entire history of art and have a particular significance in Christian iconography in the West, such as the depictions of the firmament in church ceiling frescoes visualising the infinity of space. When portraying clouds, their amorphous shape makes it difficult to create a specific physical space. As a result traditional concepts of perspective shift towards a metaphysical universe. In the process of painting and in the resulting images, the boundaries are blurred between the shapes and the base within the context of traditional systems of representation, which consist of points, lines and surfaces.

The iconography of Rondinone's cloud paintings, like his other works, is based on German romanticism: the blue sky dominates the image, while the white cloud layers – or rather the depiction of water vapour condensation – is merely implied in the lower part of the image close to the edges. The ephemeral quality of this type of representation places the clouds outside the image, thus creating the mystical atmosphere that features in many of Rondinone's other works. The artist counteracts the visual dissipation of the shapes and the base with the rounded edges of the canvas, which symbolise the structure of a cloud and define it through a sculptural intervention. Rondinone thus conceptualises the visual approach to the illustrated content and turns the individual tableaux into objects. The design of these objects is reminiscent of winged altarpieces, where the rounded edges are evocative of clouds.

Rondinone's images of clouds are almost completely empty of their object and its representation.

The absence of the visual elements provokes a chain of association concerning topics and motifs. This minimalistic and abstract gesture triggers moments of contemplation with a host of references, in a similar way to his images of starry skies. Rondinone thus re-encodes the language system of art in its syntactic compositions by juxtaposing the visuality of painting and sculptural elements in equal measure.

Walter Seidl

(English translation: Mandana Taban)

*(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)*