

Galerie Mezzanin
Karin Handlbauer
63, rue des Maraîchers
CH-1205 Geneva
T +41 22 328 38 02
geneva@galeriemezzanin.com
www.galeriemezzanin.com

Walter Vopava

Opening: 18, 19, 20 March 2021, 12:00-18:00
Exhibition: 18.03.–01.05.2021

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Galerie Mezzanin is pleased to announce the first exhibition of the Austrian painter Walter Vopava in Geneva.

Vopava is widely regarded as one of the most important representatives of New Abstraction in Austria. Together with Erwin Bohatsch, Herbert Brandl, Gunter Damisch, Hubert Scheibl and others, he was one of the “New Wild Ones” in the 1980s who brought expressive painting back into focus. Since the 1990s his oeuvre consists mainly of atmospheric abstract paintings; his puristic compositions are committed to a reduction in colour and form, never representing something clear and defined, but rather conveying an original visual language through a structure of subtraction and addition, transitions, connections and layers.

The engaging and immersive characteristic of his large format paintings, that have nothing systematic or methodical about them, arises through the dialogue between light and darkness. Mystical in its subdued mood, Vopava’s compositions find themselves in a twilight state with contourless forms. Even though the darkness might appear dominant at first – one should note that the artist works with a range from almost pure black to pure white nowadays, in contrast to the shades of brown prevalent in the 90s – light eventually prevails, creating an inner «glow» of the different painted layers (sometimes complemented by the primary colour green or the spectral colour violet). These subtly nuanced colour surfaces might at first stand in some kind of competition, but then dissolve into an almost sacral coexistence, hereby following the colour theory according to Goethe, which is based on elementary, polar opposites of light and dark, where all colours represent “border phenomena” between light and darkness.

“It’s not light and shadow. Because that already has such a representational, realistic idea. It’s more about the possibility of articulating about light and dark at all.”¹ – Walter Vopava

Solo exhibitions have taken place at Kunsthalle Krems (2011) and the Secession (1994). He participated in group exhibitions at the Grazer Kunstverein, Lentos Kunstmuseum, Shanghai Art Museum & National Art Museum of China in Beijing. In 2011, Vopava was awarded the Austrian Art Prize.

(with support of the Austrian Kulturforum in Bern)

¹ “Malerei Wider das System und seine Kontrolle”, by Anne Katrin Feßler / *DER STANDARD*, Print, 28.12.2011