

The representation of reality has always been a difficult undertaking. The problems begin with the definition of reality and any kind of visualization is an undertaking of a philosophical nature. The visual representation of reality is therefore a broad field in the history of fine art. The boundaries to the abstract or the surreal are fluid, as are the boundaries to the fantastic, and there is all too easy danger of slipping into the arbitrariness of pathetic, kitschy or stereotypical allegories.

A generation of artists who nevertheless dedicated themselves to this task in the spirit of analytical rationalism with painterly meticulousness were once the representatives of New Objectivity and Magical Realism. And an artist who, almost a century later, has once again set out to make an artistic attempt to combine dreamlike symbolism with the greatest possible graphic or painterly accuracy in the reproduction of something objective is the Austrian-born Torsten Slama (*1967). For years, his series of motifs featuring buildings, industrial plants, engines, technical structures and people have enchanted museum visitors and collectors. With their cool seriousness, they evade quick interpretation as well as superficiality in terms of motifs in times of digital unlimitedness.

Torsten Slama's drawings and paintings depict engines, vehicles and buildings, often industrial structures in an undefined landscape. Most of the images are devoid of human figures, so that the well-preserved buildings or machines appear like relics from an extinct civilisation. These surreal worlds created by the artist are complemented by signs or objects that seem to hover over the scenes like evil omens. Torsten Slama shows the viewer a world that seems to be at a turning point, or perhaps has already passed it – society's ever-growing environmental awareness is turning into misanthropy, with many believing that the earth would be a better place without the presence of humans.

The Kunstverein Bremerhaven is presenting Torsten Slama for the first time in the northwest with a selection of recent works.

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