

# SCHWARZ CONTEMPORARY

## CLARA BRÖRMANN - 6 Farben / 6 Colours

May 4 to June 2, 2018

The process of finding an exhibition title ended with 6 Farben / 6 Colours. It is a concise, clear title that piques our interest, because it sounds like the name of a collection. Are the colours on the painter's palette meant here? Or the colours of the works in the show? Why six colours? And of course, which colours are they, now for the season of spring/summer 2018?

Looking for associations in connection of the number six and the term colour, some people might think of a rainbow... Some may hoist a rainbow flag in their minds, or remember the Apple logo that was first used in 1977, which played with that combination of colours: the rainbow apple. The technology corporation renewed the patent on this image brand that raises our visual appetite. Gerhard Richter created a painting called *Sechs Farben* as part of his series of colour chart paintings; that was in 1966. And perhaps someone has tried out Edward de Bono's *Six Thinking Hats* [in German: *Das Sechsfarben Denken*], a training model for structuring thinking - which uses six differently coloured hats. But what hides behind Clara Brörmann's six colours? In her catalogue from 2016, we read the following:

*For me, colour is a material with which I work. Colour is plastic, it has a body. My choice is dictated by criteria such as opaque, transparent, flat, deep, warm, cold, or contrasting. I rarely use brash, loud colours, and not really ever artificial ones like neon paints; I don't want them to push themselves too much into the foreground. I never mix my paints; I use them as they come from the tube. But the layering results in a mixture.*

(Clara Brörmann in conversation with Christine Nippe, p. 15)

If we take this literally, for Clara Brörmann the materiality of colour(s) and their material qualities seem to be at the centre, and less their psychological effect or connection to certain objects or shapes. Thus, we may perhaps understand her paintings first and foremost as image complexes, and colour as their building material - if we were inclined to use such a metaphor.

For years now, the artist has been developing her mainly abstract paintings, which often play with ornamentation, in a (self-)disruptive process without a previous building plan and - these days, that is almost worth mentioning - without any digital aids.

Her works are created in a dialogue between her and whatever colours and paints she has on the canvas below or in front of her, depending on whether the latter is on the floor or leans against the wall. In the back of her mind, she has, of course, as capital her considerable practical experience and her art historical pictorial memory. That means the result – the finished motif, where we can trace the steps of the artist almost physically, how she paints over, scrapes, rips, or works systematically with the attractive or repellent or other special qualities of certain kinds of paints such as ink or pure pigments – develops in her actions.

Standing in her studio in front of her paintings, one almost imagines that they emerged of their own accord, on their own from the canvas, like in a process of maturation, since we can see that below the paintings there are heaps of paint chippings on the floor. And that is rather reminiscent of leaves or perhaps even more of the bark that sycamore trees regularly shed – which leaves a peculiar, also multilayered colour pattern on their trunks.

But we are losing sight of the thread in red here: what exactly is up with Clara Brörmann's six colours of the title? I can tell you that much: the six (!) paintings in the exhibition, all of them portrait formats measuring 170 x 120 cm, are each named after a colour, such as *blau, gelb, weiß* - *blue, yellow, white*. These are, which has been typical for the artist, once again no monochromes; rather, the colour that dominates the painting is the one that is named. And there are actually hints of figurative elements – including the motif of a wave, a leaf, or a flame – mixed into the abstraction. So the colours do have symbolic value here. From the process of finding a title, the author vaguely remembers that they might potentially point in the direction of the elements: water, fire... A concrete assignation is left to the beholder, if he or she is so inclined. And those who are not quite green behind the ears will recognise some art historical references. The six colours are ready for inspection.

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The opening is on Thursday, May 3, 2018, from 6 to 8 pm. The exhibition will be on show from May 4 to June 2, 2018.

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