

The Painting of Forking Paths

Isabelle Borges

Isabelle Borges' art is an art of representation. How it relates to and contains the "real world" only becomes clear after closer examination. It is helpful here to distinguish between surface and background. The term "surface" is meant literally. This is only possible because the individual works have both a surface as well as depth. Surface means the material appearance of the painting. The beholder needs to come close to the painting in order to see how its individual elements are treated. At the same time, this is the place where the artistic view of the world, a sense of time and space, a positioning in the now reveal themselves, and where they are examined conceptually and serially. On the one hand, there is the base of the paintings that has functional significance. From this usually multi-colored ground, shapes arise whose figure and content remain abstract. This "layer" consists of individual distinct shapes that are integrated into a kind of macrostructure, like a kind of ring. This macrostructure lends depth and a specific spatiality to the paintings. In the overall structure of the paintings, a fragmentation of the world is revealed as a simultaneity of opposites. The beholder can experience this spatiality quite concretely, as a kind of fall into the (usually empty) center. But our gaze is arrested by the details of the structure. We recognize words, fragments of pictures, and snippets of newspaper. These are actually clues about the materials Isabelle Borges uses. She finds her material in newspapers, magazines, and brochures, and integrates these into her paintings as a kind of foreign matter. At the same time, this foreign matter is legible and has content. The decisive momentum here is that of the return of reality in an abstract space such as the painting. Through the letters, time and space can, as it were, be assessed. That also has a literary quality and reminds us of Dada, Kurt Schwitters, and also Max Ernst. In this view, Isabelle Borges' work is an archeology of modernism from its origins to today. The title of this text tries to make that clear. It is a reference to the great Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges and his story "The Garden of Forking Paths."

In Isabelle Borges' paintings you can get lost, but you will always find points where reality can be discovered again.

Thomas Wulffen

Translation: Wilhelm Werthern, www.zweispachkunst.de