

»Correspondences« | Exhibition at Hattingen Municipal Museum, September 2021Thomas Koch – in dialog with Marie-France Goerens | Alex Klein | Karl Kriebel | Tonneke Sengers | Guido Zehetbauer-Salzer

Guido Zehetbauer-Salzer

THE POWER OF THE LINE

Guido Zehetbauer-Salzer's works on paper definitively convey how the line is so much more than the mere hallmark of an artist, it is indeed a means of emotional expression. He devotes his full concentration and total commitment to one subject – the forest – in an extraordinary manner. He uses all his senses to understand the forest, to capture the sublime moment, to engage with the energy, the rustle of the wind, the sounds and smells so typical of the woods and the forest floor, the moods and the play of light. And encapsulates all these emotions in one line.

Maximum emotion triggered by what would appear to be minimal effort. Every stroke is perfect, emerging from the depths, immediately arresting the senses, the power of the line translated into expression. Personal experiences, sensations are awakened, the vividness of memories revived. While vegetation zones on this planet may vary and cultures may differ – the meaning of the forest is almost universal. Myths and tales, the discovery of nature, the unique stillness of the forest, the feeling of safety, those mysterious moments, the archetypal split second. Respect for the beauty, the intensity of the adventure that is nature.

Forest flora interact with one another as they grow, responding to the space that surrounds them, to light and shade, evolving on nature's terms. Guido Zehetbauer-Salzer seeks out these relationships and decodes the actual dependences of this seemingly arbitrary growth in a manner that is sometimes easily readable, sometimes set on a higher level of abstraction. The characteristic style of brushstroke and line are always recognizable. The mirror of his emotion.

The tangible density of the forest portrayed in his paintings, the exuberant emotion, the sense of happiness, juxtapose with the compactness of his drawings. This formal reduction reveals the inward reflection, the power drawn from restraint and concentration. The essence of the forest in a few brushstrokes. Allusive and yet all-embracing. Filling the surrounding white space with their intensity, with their impact.

While he lets the surface take the lead in his paintings, his sensory impressions in bright colors making the canvas vibrate, he prioritizes the power of the line in his works on paper. The line finds its way across the surface – its energy drives it forward, sets the direction across the paper.

The clarity of colors is to be found in both his paintings and his drawings. "EisKristallWald" stimulates the senses, as does "FichtenGruen" and "HerbstGlut". The seasons. The color spectrum of their cycle in our part of the world seems to have been reversed. He seeks sanctuary in the colors of late summer. For him fall, like no other season, represents "the finiteness of life and how precious our being is". This is the power inherent in his works. Building tension and in the same moment creating a balance through that very same tension.

The apparent abstractness is juxtaposed with the real impression, the actual tree.

"RundWanderWeg", "WienerWaldWeg", "JungBuchen". The titles of the works locate the moment. Silent observer, capturing the fulfilling moment. Committing the fleeting moment of happiness to permanence.

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