

PANTA Rei

Text by Curator and Art Critic Pontus Kyander.

FOR THE MUSEUMS SHOW AT GUAN SHANYE ART MUSEUM, SHENZHEN IN CHINA

Regarding the serie of paintings: Travel log

Everything is floating. Panta Rei. The paint fluidly floating over the surface of the painting, reality floating on the retina, the borders between the reality and the image flow. Like a summer's day, eyes half closed, everything is hazy and unclear. Reality turns into a colour field, dots and patterns softly melting into each other.

Abstraction and reality float. They float together like Siamese twins on a sea of soft ice. Which is the one, and which is the other?

Gitte Winther's paintings are real. Not much to deny, when you see them. They have density, weight, size, and a strong presence. They are also abstract, if you want them to be. But reality seems to be invited through the back door. Afternoon at the Golf Course offers this wide panorama of... well, it is not exactly clear what. A horizon is mimicked, a sky (if you are prepared to accept a light green sky). There are shapes floating, like notes from a music score, or golf clubs. A massive agglomeration of colours to the left in the painting could suggest a tree trunk, or a wall of boards. But actually, the moment you try to identify anything more precisely in the image, this figuration instantly starts to dissolve. It floats. Abstraction and figuration combine and deny each other, like an old couple grown into and out of each other's habits. Which is the one, which is the other?

5 a.m., Yokohama Harbour implies a reality. A foggy morning, a sinister purple sky, a pier in the background, buildings, maybe a lighthouse towering on the pier. But this vision is framed by a strange vegetative setting, as if some Brazilian "tropicalismo" had been injected into the fantasy. But accepting it as "real", you get in trouble with the fields of yellow, grey and red floating about to the right in the painting. Still, whether figurative or not, the solidity of the brighter surfaces in the painting creates an impression of a foreground and a background. Depth. So if considered abstract, it is still abstraction within a fictitious three-dimensionality.

In a painting like Salt Basins in Nevada the leaning towards some kind of figuration, which could be understood as a landscape – and yes this reading is stressed by the title – is not only sabotaged by an abstract tendency, but also disturbed by a strongly ornamental element. Like in 1960's textiles, a leaning towards pure colour fields that could be describes as oriental – oriental as in the batik patterns. But the heat, figurative or not, is undeniable, as five or six solar bodies seem to hover under the yellow sky.

In Gitte Winther's smaller paintings, the tendency is more clearly abstract. Forms become more

dominant, the fictions of spatiality are replaced by an examination of formal and colour relations. Fields and patterns meet in both personal and basic painterly experiments. They are dense, and with an intensity that gives each image a solid presence, but also a more straightforward flatness. Surfaces, playing with each other, like butterflies on a sunlit meadow.