

Being with oneself

Imbued with „the code of all living“, Emad Korkis' works reflect all that is transient. Light and dark, growth and decay are the elemental companions of his oeuvre, which is both earthbound and somewhat dance-like. The fact that he dances, that he pays artistic homage to the beauty of existence, is due to his wide open embrace of the world.

At the same time, his work carries with it the agony of life. How biographically the viewers want to interpret this, how many references they see to the experiences of flight, farewell and new beginnings in a foreign land, is up to them. Emad Korkis goes far beyond this in his claim: his works aim at the basic conditions of existence, which is always finite. These existential limits can only be transcended, as Korkis suggests, in the creative communion of man and nature and of people towards each other.

This multifaceted catalogue of works by the artist, who was born in Hasakah, Syria in 1979, and who studied in Damascus, refers to a creative phase spanning for about five years. Korkis combines painting, installation and poetry, bursting with creativity and expressive will and meandering between figure and abstraction.

Despite the divergent pictorial language, his works have a recognisable but dynamic coherence. Most significant of all is his treatment of materials. In the best medieval artistic tradition, to which something mysteriously alchemical has always been attached, the artist creates his colours himself. He obtains them from the decoction of boiled walnuts and pomegranates, from tree bark and different coloured earths. Liquefied clay, mud and chalk are combined with paper, plant fibres, plaster, ash and ink and applied to wooden panels or canvas. Modern civilisation comes in with acrylic paints.

This flowing, all-pervading interplay of materials can be joined by grasses and brushwood collected as flotsam from the waterside. The traces left by the flowing water in the shore areas trace his works and raise them to a new level.

The frequently occurring warm, colourful earth tones are often associated with Korkis' Syrian homeland. However, the artist finds his materials everywhere, on the Rhine near Wiesbaden as well as on Mallorca and in the Middle East. This cosmopolitan approach corresponds much better to his reality of life and his universalistic artistic interest. And so we are all invited to relate his images to ourselves. Perhaps Western-Eastern traditions come to mind, according to which we are all taken from the earth and become earth again.

The wonderful photographs by Monika Houck in this volume give an insight into Emad Korkis' way of working, his layering and building aimed at the sculptural. His paintings are created on the floor, he throws, layers and grinds his materials on the horizontal support and lets them dry there. The raw treatment forms a poetic, multi-dimensional image, to which his texts, created independently, blend in naturally.

In essence, Korkis succeeds in finding himself and being with himself in an increasingly nervous world that has also set him in motion. Being with oneself does not mean having everything under control. It carries with it the hard traits of loneliness. But being with oneself also speaks of a maturity that is evident in his work. Here, a dancer works off at nature and humanity in order to reconcile them, knowing quite well how difficult this is.