

## **Project space: Lisa Pakschies – Ulrike Doßmann**

In her work **Lisa Pakschies** is concerned with the mystery of painting, i.e. with the question of how an image is formed, how the elements come together and gain autonomy. Her mainly abstract compositions, whether drawings with charcoal or pencil or paintings, are based on the basic elements point and line, which combine into a structure full of tension and form a textural meshwork similar to a woven texture. The paint is applied in a Divisionist manner that emphasizes the single brush stroke and lets it oscillate between its adjacent stroke and the ground respectively. This kind of application not only reveals the single steps in the process of painting and its inherent temporality, but also plays to the artist's need for clarity and order – which puts her pictures close to Concrete art. Moreover, the fine flow and the small format of her art works are reminiscent of the art of miniatures and illuminations, the traditionally strict discipline of which she combines with an intuitively felt abstraction. She leaves the intimate small format only in a few cases, as in the painting *Thicket*. Despite the even arrangement of the colour pulling towards two centres, the painting implicates a certain degree of disorientation, an ordered chaos. The technique of egg tempera has an equally long tradition and Lisa Pakschies values this technique especially due to its resistance, its luminance, and intensity. According to the ratio of ingredients single pigments might sediment on the surface during the drying process and, thus, create a relief structure, which intensifies the optic experience, but which also bestows a fragile vulnerability upon the painting. It is the preference for red, flesh-coloured hues that conjures up associations of nudity, skin, blood, and flesh. With her *objets trouvés*, painted with egg tempera, glue, or oil paint, the artist tests the boundaries of painting and explores the material appeal of resistance. An everyday towel, slightly weathered wood and plastic pieces or even a fragment of a tiled wall become equivalents to the classic canvas support, they get prepared, scratched, scraped, and primed, while retaining their unalterable object character. The fastidious crafting of the object's edges, which are literally the boundaries of the painting, preserves its intrinsic value.

**Ulrike Doßmann's** starting point is always the living model that she tries to capture in his or her human entirety. Thus, her plastic artwork is accompanied by numerous drawings, in which she captures the relation to her model with all its tensions, expectations and questionings, without, however, aiming at physical or anatomical correctness. The faces in her drawings are mostly split into several perspectives without a clear focus, thus, appearing to be blurry and in motion. At first, the portrait sculptures are assembled from different,

randomly found objects and materials. Afterwards, these assemblages are cast into different materials – like plaster, polyurethane, epoxy, or bronze – and are finally reassembled. Despite the new unifying material the distinct surfaces remain recognizable in their specific look and feel. Similarly, the seams and marks, which emphasize the working process, stand out. Playfully oscillating between abstraction, fragmentation, and reshaping, these portraits cannot be comprehended with categories such as facial recognition and representation. In fact, the artist reveals her very own interpretation of the sitter's individual being, expressing it in corresponding forms. This confrontation becomes much more complex in Ulrike Doßmann's installations, drawings, and sculptures, which are related to court hearings that the artist attended. On the one hand, she is interested in the established, reoccurring court procedure and the related patterns of interpretation. On the other hand, the courtroom fascinates her as such, since it serves as a shelter in our society and also provokes emotionally extreme situations. First, she captures what happens during the hearings in numerous sketches and tries to come close to the room's atmosphere and the persons' emotions and characters. In her studio she then transforms her sketches into sculptural works or work groups, which mirror the spatial as well as emotional relations of the court hearings – without, however, depending upon any sort of narrative. The assemblage *Masks S.R.+B.*, for example, shows two figures vis-à-vis. It tells us nothing about their fate but instead focuses only on their interrelation. This is characterised by a certain tension, which eventually unfolds a lack of true relationship.

Though taking different paths, Lisa Pakschies and Ulrike Doßmann, who both studied at Braunschweig University of Art, address the same fundamental questions in art: What is an image and how does it come into existence? Both artists unite a sense for materiality and the search for that moment in which the chosen material reveals an image and something appears on the surface. The processual development of the image is in both cases recognisable – either in the painting's support, in the visible work-traces, or in the single elements of a sculpture – and, thus, prevents a purely narrative interpretation of their works. This process might also be described as the artists' self-expression, which manifests itself in an expressive act, at the heart of which lies an individual necessity.

(Text: Marie Christine Tams)