

## Amelie von Wulffen

27 February – 30 March 2013

A lion and a tiger lock jaws in a deathly embrace. It is a spectacular paragonal scene after a drawing by Delacroix which Amelie von Wulffen places into an abstract colour space, the like of which one might find on a beautiful silk scarf. In the works by this Berlin artist, disparate painterly vocabularies, like those of figuration and abstraction, encounter one another with great density and ferocity, and representation is repeatedly ruptured, leading into an abstract, psychologically charged space.

Amelie von Wulffen is well known for her collaged pictures that extend photography with painterly means beyond the image, and that continue paintings beyond the frame, the borders of representation, into real space on walls or even furniture. In her latest works, some of which have already been shown at the Aspen Art Museum, there are no longer any photographic self-portraits or memories from her familial surroundings, no direct counterparts in reality.

Rather, Amelie von Wulffen shows painting as a highly artificial construct. She ploughs through layers of older oil paintings from pre and early modernism, fragments them and zooms in on individual subjects. In the exhibition, we find loans from still lifes by Goya, Courbet, as well as Dutch still lifes and landscapes and self-portraits after Marées, Caillebotte, van Gogh, and again Goya, introduced like individual chapters where one can spend some time. But in addition to these familiar motifs from art history, the artist also uses other creative designs: *Lüftmalerei* (decoratively painted facades, common in Bavaria and Tyrol), decorative wall paintings in restaurants, or handicrafts like dip paint or batik dyeing.

The still lifes of dead animals, dead flowers and fruits, isolated, cut-apart objects that are displayed like commodities interest Amelie von Wulffen as the historic moment of painting that is becoming conscious of itself and presents the perfect illusion as such. In her exhibition, a hugely inflated and mutated blowfly, which may have risen from the macabre animals, circles as a *trompe-l'œil* in the staircase, painting with its science-fiction like insect legs abstract smears onto the canvas.

In the self-portraits, the appropriation in the active imitation of the painterly gesture of those who are absently present, who have seen themselves in the mirror and now look out at the beholders from another time, is even more direct, and closer. The self-portrait marks the moment of the highest self-referentiality, into which Amelie von Wulffen subsequently inscribes herself to produce something like a painted star poster of the artists she admires.

The gaze from the painting goes hand in hand with other techniques that open up the painterly space. The niches, windows, and doors that create an illusion of space in still lifes link what is palpably close with things that are further away. Amelie von Wulffen executes the opening to an outside in her abstract *Lüftmalerei* on the gallery's interior walls, but above all along the rupture lines in her pictures, in the dream-like, confrontational combination of very different pictorial fragments that are executed either as analytical re-enactments, but sometimes also regale in the colours. By focussing on the possibilities and conditions of the medium, she reveals painting as an extremely artificial space that is nonetheless continuously compared to, and reconciled with, other horizons of experience.

If we leave the exhibition with the sense of just having finished a book, or of leaving the cinema and going outside, where it is perhaps still light, and if we then turn around, we once again encounter Goya's gaze with Amelie von Wulffen's eyes, and that is what we then take with us into reality.

(Text: Anette Freudenberger)

(Translation: Wilhelm v. Werthern)