

Brigitte Waldach – Artist Statement

Space / Dimensions

There are three different types of drawings in my work: the spontaneous hand-drawn sketch, the large-format conceptual drawing within a series, and installative spatial drawings, in which I use flexible rubber bands to situate thoughts and dialogues in the space.

In my drawings and installations I try to find a form that is as open as possible. I often use a representational motif or figures that represent specific perspectives, who seem to have already entered the visual space before we do.

I present the universal as a void, which can be white or black, light or dark, as well as through cultural symbols, for example the cross, pentagram, Star of David, or septagram. White paper or a white wall in the space contains a lot of invisible information – it is like white noise, in which a motif becomes visible every now and then. Some of the colors in my paintings are historically or culturally charged, while other colors I chose individually and instinctively based on the given themes. The color red is known to have the strongest emotional connotations, being associated with violence, passion, and love. Red has room for everything, from horror films to revolutionary symbolism. My work takes a color's many aspects into consideration, so that different themes may be given the same color. For example, for me, graphite gray stands for the universe, infinite space, power, mass, representation, permanency, and the state.

The Visual Space

By space I do not only mean the physical dimensions of an indoor or outdoor space, but also a space of thought or culture, whether or not it is comprehensible to us. Time and space are interdependent in the collective consciousness and in current processes. Without temporal or spatial restrictions, a kind of "universal history" can emerge, so that everything that is happening, and that can or will happen, is in a causal relationship.

Because our traditions and rituals can connect different eras, I look for analogies, common structures, or something comparable.

Text Clouds

Texts also formally structure my visual space, making it flat or deep, familiar or full of mystery. This creates an "inscribed" space in which the viewer's thoughts can also resound. The various texts are written in different colors or shades of color, enabling possible, but not mandatory, associations. The more reduced my implementation of artistic means, the more freedom remains for the viewer. Often the themes, thoughts, and words in the image are already so complex that a larger color spectrum might distract from the subject and the possible associations.

Spatial Drawings

Brigitte Waldach installation, Existence, at the Felix Nussbaum Haus in Osnabruck, is truly an inspiring one. The technique of stringing together cables to produce projected images is as stunning as it is thought provoking. She takes the architecture as a world that is penetrable by forces that go far beyond the building and creates her own light and shadows to illuminate the opacity of walls. The effect is profoundly moving because each line is a

vector whose origin is unknown but whose destination we can see. At the same time, the flattened world itself corrodes the planes upon which it falls and continues to expand its energy towards a future which is as obscure as the past is irreversible. Brigitte Waldach has created a stunning, original, and highly specific work, which brings Felix Nussbaum's spirit to an unexpected rebirth in a museum dedicated to him.

Daniel Libeskind

In a two-dimensional visualization, the perspectives are formally restricted, while the lines of sight in a three-dimensional spatial drawing are nearly endless, multiplying through the viewer's different positions. They are depending on physical and psychological factors, such as the exhibition visitor's body size, sociocultural influences, or mental states.

For me, a spatial drawing is also a communicative act in its creation. First, I explore the exhibition space and react to the physical details, sketching my ideas. Then I fine-tune these ideas in a virtual space as a 3D model. Many details cannot be planned virtually, so I make final decisions while creating the work in the exhibition space.

Ultimately, a spatial drawing also corresponds to a stage without concrete instructions for action. A lot can happen during perception; what is important to me is that my spatial drawings are entered and "experienced". Their reception – how they are perceived by others – will always be surprising.

At the same time, I want to break away from the idea of a three-dimensional space to create a multidimensional space, a kind of hyperspace, even if it is more of a sensual experience than one that can actually be touched. In this hyperspace, the past and the future rotate around the point of the present, while reality and fantasy revolve around the concept of perception. The idea of infinity can lead to dizziness, fear, and insecurity, but at the same time, it can also have a liberating effect.

In my spatial drawings I use textile rubber bands like guiding systems or signposts, which connect our chain of thoughts to spatial structures. They can also show how language structures space, how thoughts and dialogues become visible.

Systems and Symbols

I have been using signs and symbols in my paper and spatial drawings for ten years now. It is surprising how formally similar the symbols of the world religions are; many of them are abstracted stars. When I confront these symbols with each other, the contexts become universal.

A few years ago, after a sudden loss of hearing, I discovered that I had developed a new ability to focus on sounds. I became able to perceive a graphic beauty in musical systems: they revealed themselves to me as an autonomous representation of nature and the world. In 2015, with my large-format triptych, *Raum* (Space), I liberated the musical notes of the prelude to Richard Strauss's score, *Also sprach Zarathustra* (Thus Spoke Zoroaster), from their staves and stems. The result was an abstract celestial constellation with its own kind of sound whose effect goes beyond the mere image, so that even the musician's outlook becomes audible. Dealing with disturbances and disruptions in systems is a way for me to truly grasp these systems; so this also became an important part of my work.

References

Culture develops from our human experiences. In the German language, the words for "secret" and "mysterious" are quite similar. Specific film references have helped me in my

search for a suitable aesthetic form to describe these two qualities; the uncanny also lurks in everyday life and the private can be addressed in such a way that it becomes exemplary and an open visual system.

In most of the drawings, I try to avoid using statements of my own, but instead confront quotes by the depicted persons with literary and historical texts. Sometimes I place emphasis on single words or arrange texts so they form new statements, which nevertheless remain abstract in their emphasis. My caution towards one-sided interpretations is likely evident in the multitude of voices that come together in my works.

Role of Women in Contemporary Society / Feminism

I do not see myself as an artist driven by feminist discourses. Of course, there are interesting female or feminist themes and ideas, but mostly I am interested in social processes in general. So I try to see (female) figures from their human side; I show their weaknesses and strengths, intellect and emotions alongside each other without judging. In doing so, I do not separate between the private and the political.

Human Memory / Human History

Traditional historiography hierarchizes cultural events; it determines what remains official. But whether it forms and determines our collective memory remains questionable. Our access to history is subjective; the writing of history is never objective. How relevant our access to the past is for others depends on a variety of factors, such as cultural and social conditioning, intelligence, education, sensitivity, empathy, and the degree of narcissism that sometimes defines us.

Creative processes are complex, and inspiration can come from anywhere. In my two- and three-dimensional drawings, I attempt to provide information and pose questions about certain topics, and above all, find the appropriate visual form for them. This corresponds to my idea of "elegance": working at a technically high level while finding clear, simple visual solutions for complex topics. In my figurative drawings I let historical figures become magnetic fields, so to speak, which attract and repel information. Inscribing the white visual space with too many motifs could limit the freedom of the "narrative space" it creates. My work is not about agitation; my aim is rather to ask questions and to examine social and cultural disorders as well as visual and virtual currents. If my works are visually so seductive that people stop for a while to ponder them, or if I can trigger emotions with my art, then I would be very satisfied.