

GALERIE NÄCHST ST. STEPHAN ROSEMARIE SCHWARZWÄLDER

HERBERT BRANDL *Der Regen*

13 March – 20 April 2019

For his ninth solo exhibition at the Galerie nächst St. Stephan Rosemarie Schwarzwälder, Herbert Brandl is showing current paintings and sculptures that signal a new and energy-charged stylistic idiom within his oeuvre.

The exhibition's titular works revolve around the phenomenon of rain. In preliminary studies and formal approaches Herbert Brandl looked at inspiring, stimulating photographs and studied at length the lighting and dynamics of falling water. The meticulous result consists of small-format atmospherically dense works that subtly capture the co-ordinates of the 'light space' and the countermovement of the impacting raindrops. These nature-based structures are complemented by the landscape motif, which since the early 1980s has spanned a broad spectrum in Brandl's oeuvre ranging from abstraction to figuration. These works pick up on details from the painter's own garden. Here delicately lit areas of meadowland are ranged alongside image-filling details of a section of hedgerow or the close-up of a monumental pine tree which, on the portrait-format canvas, is segmented into atmospheric individual impressions through his dynamic brushstrokes.

Particularly remarkable is the group of works that consists of newly created medium-format canvases, prefiguring a new and powerfully luminous imagery in the oeuvre of the sixty-year-old Herbert Brandl. Without any representational reference the vibrantly colourful works stand out visibly from earlier phases in his oeuvre, attesting to an analytical interest in finely colour gradients and textures. But these gestural and impastoed paintings, each completed in a single phase, also illustrate the dazzling speed and energy in Brandl's work process as he lays out this frenzy of colour on the canvas surface with palette knife and spatula.

A further aspect of the exhibition focuses on the artist's new sculptures. Here for the first time Brandl has chosen to transpose to the three-dimensional space the theme of the crystal, a theme he had previously visited exclusively in monotypes and oil paintings, but now showcasing two aluminium casts as a formally antagonistic duo. There is also an autobiographic aspect to his use of the crystal motif. Indeed, the templates for the digitally enlarged sculptures of the rock crystals come from Brandl's own collection. But there is also a metaphorical interpretation to the monolithic appearance of the self-contained crystal formation. At this exhibition it can certainly be seen as a symbolic closure and completion of a phase of artistic work and as an energy-packed departure towards something new.

Daniel Brezina

Herbert Brandl was born in Graz in 1959; he lives and works in Vienna. 2004 – 2019 Professorship at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. Herbert Brandl took part in the São Paulo Biennale in 1989 and the Documenta IX in Kassel in 1992. In 2007 he represented Austria at the Venice Biennale.

Solo exhibitions (selected): Kunsthalle Bern; Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent; Museum Haus Esters, Krefeld; Secession, Vienna; Kunsthalle Basel; Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum, Graz; Deichtorhallen Hamburg; Albertina, Vienna; Bank Austria Kunstforum, Vienna; Osthaus Museum Hagen; Haus der Kunst St. Josef, Solothurn.

Museum collections (selected): Albertina, Vienna; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Kunsthaus Zürich; Kunstmuseum Bonn; Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris; Museu Serralves, Porto; Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna; Reina Sofia, Madrid; Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich; The Renaissance Society, Chicago; Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz