

Monica Hansebakken: Bergzauber

Exhibition Pumpwerk, Siegburg, 7. June - 25. July 2008

Monica Hansebakken shows a selection of her paintings on wood from the last four years. The focus of Hansebakken's work during this period has been landscapes seen not through the gaze of a romantic, but with a clear and analytical approach that recognises aesthetic qualities in urban landscapes and seeks to overlay these onto lines and forms from natural settings / natural landscapes.

This exhibition shows the artistic development of the work, starting with the first series of pieces from 2004 and 2005 of mountain landscapes of Norway and the rocky coast of Brittany which used strong and vibrant colours. The works from 2006 to today are more toned down in colour and also focus mainly on mountain themes of Norway and Europe. A "red thread" going through the motives of this exhibition is the artist's fascination with both the beauty and danger of Nature.

Painting is combined with sculptural techniques inspired by the artist's experience with sculpture and traditional Norwegian carving. The application of ancient ornamental patterns carved in a work is an unusual element. Silhouettes integrated into the work show man's connection to Nature and, symbolically, how man becomes part of Nature in these works. Individual experience and perception of silhouettes change with the viewer. One person may see a shape reminiscent of a famous painting; another will see something else based on their own experiences.

Hansebakken's way of approaching a motive reminds you more of a sculptor than a painter and draws on lines and forms from the original place, something the artist calls a "grid". In so doing, she brings a three-dimensional expression to a two-dimensional medium.

Her work explores aesthetic possibilities inside a "grid" and motive, within which intuition and emotion are freely applied. The resulting work exhibits aesthetic qualities of urban landscapes – crisp, planned, structured, clean – overlaid onto a natural setting. Hansebakken's landscapes present a playground of artistic exploration of form, allowing viewers to immerse themselves in a unique visual language where abstraction and figuration meet.

About the Artist

Monica Hansebakken was born in Etnedal, Norway. In 2002 she completed her Master's Studies at the Slade School of Fine Art in London as a student of Professor Edward Allington. The Slade School of Fine Art has been one of the most important Art schools since the end of the 19th century.