

TARA SABHARWAL

Gallery introduction by Johannes Dorflinger for Tara's December 2002 solo exhibition at Neue Kunst, Galerie (Michael Oess Galerie), Konstanz, Germany.

More than 10 years ago I discovered Tara Sabharwal's work for the first time at the Royal Art College, where I was teaching. She had won a scholarship for another year of studies. Of all Art schools in England the best students were awarded with a prize, and Tara was one of them.

However, already then she was acting clearly different to most of the other scholarship holders. While almost all of the others were concentrating on explaining the current art scene and were eager to leave a good impression at their final exhibition in order to be admitted by any one gallery or other art school, Tara Sabharwal had already found her own system.

She had her own world, in which she was painting as if wandering in a forest and was slowly unlocking the worlds that we are still able to see today and here among us. The paintings have nothing in common with the illustrations for children's books or bibles, neither are they caricatures. For this reason they are very dangerous alien elements for our official art scene in Konstanz. They are like a dangerous taboo.

The paintings are complicated and on their surface they are neither easy, light, nor funny and decorative, because they are the authentic expression of an artist's personality who is foreign to us.

A psychologist might interpret and explore experiences of life or mind and feel happy about the poetic lightness, which can be felt in them. In fact existential questions are handled. For example, we could ask in which container of the environment am I today or tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. Through which house in the paintings am I going at this moment. Am I heading towards my own habits or am I going through the house on a trip towards India or England or back and forth. A travel through critical observations of experiences of mind, that can cause discomfort, energy, as well as animal joy and cosy involvement in birth and death too.

We all see, if we are open for it, art works through the lenses of our own imaginary museum. Depending on our interests, moods, coincidences, experiences and receptivity we have lenses inside us through which we are looking, judging, getting angry or happy. For the art work of Tara there are obvious signposts. In addition to Indian miniature with plants, gardens and animals, and the daily experiences of life, tantrum constellations have been appearing recently. Ribbons that surround the earth, flames that emerge from houses and grasp people. Mysterious material balls between which a new woman's figure appears and lives.

I would like to remind you of the early drawings of Frida Kahlo and also of the beautiful sketches of master Luise Bourgois. Both artists melt forms and contexts of different

cultures in the same way as you can see here.

Still another lens of my and your imaginary museum fits here. Artists that have created their own, new worlds.

Louis Soutter, whose current exhibition in Basel shows human figures in human forests, which in their own worlds are further transforming themselves into groups of figures, into additional forests and into signs of figuration which suddenly seem completely familiar to us.

Futhermore the worlds of those artists that have been collected in the museum Lagerhaus by Mrs and Mr Schaufelberger in St. Gallen, of visionaries, who on the edge of the outsider life are cultivating a world like a garden.

Those artists are independent of the easier accessible crowns of foam of the so called *Ñmainstreami* and they show astonishing, exciting freshness. They let the paintings appear fresh as if they had been painted yesterday.

The hybrid creatures of different existence in the artwork of Tara Sabharval are particularly well described in a saying by the French philosopher Francois Jullien. He explains in a concise and extraordinary understanding: Today the universal is often confused with the uniform.

But today we reflect much clearer, we create a distance to generality, because we realize that we can experience other psychological worlds and not only our own psychological world.

Right in this manner we have to understand the tradition of the western modern age in art. It is through the experience of another culture that the cultural work still lives on today.

Johannes D^rflinger, December 2002, Konstanz

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