

## **Willi Seibetseder – Mental connections**

by Hartwig Knack

translated by Walter Kosar

From the first moment of sight, Willi Seibetseder's paintings catch us immediately. Abstract worlds of color – mostly expressed gesturally – meet hidden figurative elements. The representational elements that one discovers were not initially set on purpose by the artist, they flow unconsciously into the painting process. In moments of calm they are recognized by Seibetseder associatively and, preserved as a formal, as well as a symbolic element, picturesquely incorporated into the picture.

The keyword “association” is of great importance here.

Not only does the artist himself enjoy discovering figurative elements in his initially non-objective world of images, but those of us, who are interested in art should also create sequences of impressions in accordance to the artist's wishes. Seibetseder speaks here of transformation, a term that in this context stands for a visual, intellectual and painterly transformation, reshaping and refiguring. The images remind one a little of puzzle pictures, search pictures, paintings and drawings like mystery-images, which have a long tradition.

They remind us of pictures that, thanks to their special construction, show different images, when viewed from different directions. Depending on which details are focused, the motif changes in form and content. In paintings by the Italian Renaissance painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo for example, after you look at it for a while, landscapes or rock formations turn out to be oversized reclining heads.

The Surrealists later took up this trick.

Salvador Dalí called this the paranoid-critical method.

He wanted to present connections as mysteriously and encrypted as possible, not in a way that could be grasped rationally at first sight. The works of Willi Seibetseder can be located in this tradition in the broadest sense. What the artist does not strive for in his paintings, however, is the carefully calculated painting of a Dalí. The Spaniard wanted to hide his motifs in a virtuoso painterly manner and to amaze the viewers, when they are suddenly confronted with a changing appearance. Willi Seibetseder's works hardly deal with such striking optical confusion, they rather mark a more open approach. In Seibetseder's pictures, each of us can discover various fictional characters and structures and interpret them personally.

Spiders, birds, rabbits, dragonheads etc. appear.

Is it a mountain, a tree, a flower or just thickly applied paint?

Many options of mental chaining are possible.

Although personal experiences, a song heard on the radio, a vacation with his son or the stressful time of the corona pandemic, often provide the background for Seibetseder's work, the artist offers us numerous opportunities to enter his work, emotionally or intellectually, and to dive individually deeper into this visual story, its places, spaces and characters.

Often the spread wings of a bird, a hint of a water lily, the folds of a dress or eyes flashing out of the thicket, that are hidden in the color structures are enough: The head cinema is about to begin.