

## Summary

A few basic, interconnected forms – circles, circular segments, ellipses, rectangles and triangles – in the pictures of Jaakov Blumas serve to create compositions that seem cohesive in many ways. Geometrically derived segments often dissolve the rectangular format of the painting. They project into the area of the surrounding wall and, in doing so, not only explore a compositional space of resonance but also incorporate the level of actual observation into the narrative of the image. Construction lines are able to add further levels to the optically dominant shapes and so generate a construct that can no longer be understood rationally. Lines reminiscent of sound waves create the impression that certain round pictorial forms are emitting energies. This feeling is further intensified by the way the paint is applied concentrically, as if in a sfumato-type creation of light and shadow. This can often lead the observer to believe that the disc-like forms are revolving as a furious speed under the influence of forces that can no longer be named. It's a kinetic constellation that requires one to adopt an appropriate distance, categorically rules out any element of the haptic and puts the emphasis firmly on visually based experience.

Other pictures present a compositional structure in which the entire surface is filled by evenly applied elements in which the visually based impression is determined by a contrast between a static-geometric structure and paint applied in linear striations with the palette blade and that possesses a clearly lower aesthetic appeal. Then again, other pictures feature an evenly applied wavelike motion that is interrupted only by the edge of the picture, with a linear-dominated structure whose optical presence may be dampened by the way the paint is applied over the forms. In this way, painting is no longer defined as an autonomously executed gesture but instead is subordinated to a predefined order.

In this context, a particular momentum demonstratively takes centre stage: an experience of space that is no longer bound to the Euclidian. First and foremost this has lost its supposedly traditional

constitution or indeed its gravity, and this leads to an insurmountable gap between the pictorial forms and the observer. Every kind of illusionism generated by the axiom of the central perspective seems to be excluded right from the start.

While the pictures of Jaakov Blumas also communicate the decisively presented impression of the real, they balance this out with their own pictorial world that eludes the observer and ultimately remains strange to him. We are presented with an external view of a constellation that is clear in its disposition, that – despite apparent closeness – in its formal self-containment presents an optically based impenetrability. Right from the start it refuses any possible, externally imposed explanations and, ultimately, insists on emotional distance.

At the same time Blumas employs large-scale, easily visible forms that, in their plastic-spatial nature, still recognize a value, even if this is no longer based on haptic-tactile qualities but instead on more visual experiences. On the other hand, any decorative effects, i.e. the guiding concept of a formal or colour-based cohesion, are banished from the start. In their sweeping, self-confident *mise-en-scène* they refuse the idea of a figurative representation. An allegorical or symbolic relationship is ruled out. The pictorial forms serve neither the emblematic or allegorical portrayal of an abstract term nor the illustration of a deeper, meaningful content. Nonetheless the striking and undeniable development of the compositional structure, which cannot be related to any external and previously existing relationship, does at least present the possibility that something else may exist alongside it, or that this entity might also be found in this form somewhere else, too.

While Blumas also aims for a schematization of the image, this certainly cannot be judged an end in itself. He discovers forms that, in their composition, create an entity both complex and self-reflective, but they still retain an almost demonstrative relationship with seen reality. So, inevitably, Blumas has to trust the imaginative power of the observer. This observer is thus confronted, first and foremost, with a

visually based, oscillating, and ultimately logically ungraspable situation of conflict. Through the act of formalizing the already known, or the supposed or the possible, he promotes the rationalization of the picture in terms of the observer's imagination and, at the same time, puts trust in his or her potential for sensual experience.

The experience of closeness and distance, of closed and open form, of surface and actual, picture-related curvature, derives from a common, optically based nucleus. However, this resists formal and content-related definitions and adopts an almost trance-like intermediate position. It forces the observer to constantly envision the special conditions regarding the experience of reality.

This leads to a pictorial understanding that Jaakov Blumas specifies as the true foundation of his artistic work: the encounter between the sensual experience of reality and the coarser, emblematic and limited transmission of the all-pervasive realization of its relative meaning. He himself says that his pictorial conception is derived from two antipodal, competing phenomena: observing the crown of a tree, and a street sign with its transmission of simple information.<sup>[1]</sup> He associates the latter with the ability to encapsulate a simple content as rapidly and impressively as possible, while the crown of the tree embodies a long-lasting and ultimately infinite tension between nature and its observer, whereby its appearance is constantly different in some way, and fascinating.

At the start of his artistic career Blumas painted nature-related, decelerated pictures, but then his artistic interest began to focus on the question of whether these pictures exist as artefacts at all if they are not seen by an audience. Formulated even more drastically: might they even be destroyed if the potential observer passes them by without paying them any attention?

In this concept, the image first takes shape in the observer's head. It is independent of external perception and is the result of a co-production. On one side of the equation is the painter who begins to create the picture and ultimately, prompted by thought, intuition and craftsmanship, brings it into a form

valid for him. And on the other side is the recipient who is prepared to recognize the picture as such and to appreciate it. If one or other of the parties does not fulfil his role, then the picture remains mute. It is either rejected and/or given no attention. In Jaakov Blumas' corollary to this, a good picture is one that is able to satisfy both expectations. In order to meet this condition it has to trigger a receptive motion. In other words, a picture can in itself open up new, unfamiliar aspects to the observer at different times. This requires sufficient time and intuitive openness. Such a project, says the artist, can only succeed if the picture abandons its mimetic pretensions. It no longer subordinates itself to a preordained significance and does not comment on this, either. So it is no surprise that the pictures of Jaakov Blumas do not define a clear centre either in terms of form or of content, and that they thus do not insist on a hierarchy of meaning either. These pictures always seem to be one step ahead of the observer, even though they appear to be simple and striking at the proverbial first glance. It is a continually disruptive balancing act between perceptual attachment and its rejection of the goal of a conscious connection to reality. The task of the painter is to bring these elements into a structural order, in repeatedly different ways and with repeatedly surprising results. When one appraises this order, it points to a state in which reality is no longer defined as an indisputable fact. Reality generates itself as an open, unpredictable process and it demands that the observer should accept and engage with it frankly. The aesthetics of his pictures require one, says Jaakov Blumas, "to travel unknown roads to unknown crossroads, at which we linger or set off once more in a new direction." When confronted by the pictures of Jaakov Blumas this is not something we do haphazardly, but instead in a manner both concentrated and determined and in the full knowledge of our own possibilities.

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