

## **A Twisted Mind Was Left Alone**

This series of works by the artist Jens Hanke, begun in 2011, combines his most recent work in drawing by taking recourse to his earlier painting using a collage principle.

Starting with the series of charcoal drawings *Synapsale Nachbilder* (Synapsal Afterimages), here more compact “clones” or “fraternal twins” emerge. The compositions and spatial bodies found there are adapted by way of a simple, manual copying. Successful compositions are now duplicated and continued in various ways, allowing variations of a possible space to emerge.

If the earlier drawings consist of skeleton-like outlines (that require the beholder to image them as spatial formations) the new works, with opulent volumes and a physical presence, come forward from the image surface. As already said, the individual works all share size and composition.

As in fine marquetry or—perhaps more fitting in terms of their impression—precious stone and semiprecious stone inlays, abstract spatial structures emerge using paper fragments painted with oils. The paper used and treated by the artist, despite its patterns, has no significant color gradient, but seems precious in its texture. As in cut stone, complex structures form within a color spectrum. By tilting the precisely fit segments and a combination of various papers, either individual interstices or all gaps are formed by the given lines. In so doing, new conglomerates of surfaces and lines emerge that in the drawings seems to generate a dimensionality that was only suspected, while a reduction to the two dimensions of the paper still dominates. But far more blatantly, three-dimensional illusions are generated. The spatial gradation of these structures, in part alogically constructed, is partially veiled or explored in other places. The position of color surfaces in the virtual space of the paper is used to create a sense of “front” and “back” without being able to logically establish this. If the drawings are striking in their ideational, conceptual wealth (which is illustrated by reduction), the new colorful variants are marked by a hybrid opulence, without negating Jens Hanke’s straightforward way of working.

As in Ludwig Mies van der Rohe’s architecture, which, as in the Barcelona pavilion, combines transparency and clarity of form with the luxurious use of natural stone (like onyx) to create a significant ensemble, in Hanke’s work apparently simple lines that combine to form a complex texture to a new unit. The claimed reference of Hanke’s collages to architecture is illuminating for many of his works, for they are about creating spatial structures, spatial sequences that offer the eye of the beholder a place to take pause and cultivated astonishment. By way of perspective, combinations are constructed as quickly as they are deconstructed.

With *A Twisted Mind Was Left Alone* a second series has been created that stands alongside the related charcoal drawings. These are not superseded or made obsolete by the new interpretation. The new works appear to be a related, yet independent variation of a given subject.

Dr. Martin Steffens

Translated by Brian Currid