



Rudolf De Crignis: “Surface”

Additional information

Rudolf De Crignis, born 1948 in Winterthur; lives and works in New York.

De Crignis aroused an echo on Zurich art scene in the mid-70s with his conceptual works in various media (sculpture, photography, installations). Initially, from the beginning of the 80s, figuratively influenced painting predominates. A scholarship in 1985 triggers a stylistic reorientation: in New York, the city the artist chose as his home in 1987, De Crignis encounters the American tradition of Minimal Art and Radical Painting and begins to turn to non-representative painting. A progressive reduction of the visible is initiated that leads, on the one hand, to monochrome paintings built up from several layers of paint in a prolonged work process and, on the other, to apparently colourless, drawings comprising line structures which De Crignis also terms “painting”.

In Switzerland his works are collected by the Kunsthau Aarau, the Haus Konstruktiv in Zurich and the Prints and Drawings Department of the Swiss National Library. In Germany there is a selection of his works in the Bonn Kunstmuseum and in the Köln Diözesanmuseum.

De Crignis is represented in various major museums in the USA for example the Busch-Reisinger Museum of Harvard University and the Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. In New York he is shown in the Peter Blum Gallery and the Margarete Roeder Gallery.

Rudolf De Crignis calls his drawings on paper or plexi-glass “paintings” just like his ‘conventional’ paintings on canvas. Like them they are the result of numerous layers of lines – graphite pencil and, in some instances, color pencil – which are then removed, partially and/ or wholly, with a soft eraser, leaving behind an almost invisible impression. This process readily translates to the medium of etching. In the etchings, a repeated horizontal and vertical layering of precisely graduated lines leaves an extraordinarily delicate impression on the surface.

Rudolf De Crignis’s “paintings” find an alternative expression in the three fold superimposed printing of three traditionally prepared copper plates, using three colours per sheet/print.

The artist himself comments on his edition “Surface”:

The three graphic works complement my oeuvre as a whole. In this graphic series I attempt to do justice to the peerlessness of light and space - as well as their rhythms - by using the engraving technique (hardground, softground and drypoint) This way I arrange various coats of colour ranging from an iridescent orange (nasturtium lemon yellow, black graphite, silver) over an iridising green (phtalo green-primrose yellow, black graphite, copper) to a shimmer of blue (ultramarine-process blue, black graphite, gold):

Coloured spatial light is created on paper or varying materials like metal or plexi.

In the catalogue Jens Peter Koerver comments on the drawings/ “paintings” as follows:

The drawing turns out to be a field made up of moments, the momentary (all stored in the work), taking over from each other, cancelling each other out, mingling, complementing. The drawing opens up another kind of seeing: it occurs, is an occurrence, relaxed, roaming, purposeless, holding on to nothing, letting itself be. Seeing is experienced as an act, a process, a still, continuing movement (similar to breathing in this), drift and transition.