

The Close-Up

Installation consisting of 8 drawings size 115 cm x 152 cm in multimedia technology. Acryl, charcoal and graphite on paper, non-woven viscose web, Japanese paper Tengucho.

After finishing my work on The Pilgrims project, I knew that drawing would be a focus for the following year. On the one hand, intuitive drawing had always been an exciting thing for me and something I really wanted to get into deeper; on the other hand I discovered the ancestral gallery two years ago, which has since developed into another focus of drawing. Then there was the multimedia work "Heavy Times" from 2005, which was important to me and to which I wanted to return in a different form. As luck would have it (actually there is no such thing as a coincidence), some scenes in "Heavy Times" were registered in the past on a film strip with a 35mm camera. Another coincidence was the impression made on me by a war film sometime in the summer of 2021. From there the idea was born to tackle both of the sources mentioned above as an emotional starting point for a drawing project. As a forerunner, I was able to use some of the findings from my recent return to drawing with the "Walter" series and other topics in small format. But there is a major difference in the effect and realization of a small and a large format drawing. With the larger dimension came further questions and the decisive one: which authentic content do I need to take into account in a coherent room installation?

The following is an explanation of this room installation. I think that in my mind this work appeared as a coherent arrangement of pictures in the middle of a room and not as individual pictures hanging on a wall. As in "Heavy Times", the scenes belong together, even if the film strip is not optically visible in the new project. When realizing the pictures, it emerged fairly soon and actually without any prior considerations that a three- to four-layer picture structure made of semi-transparent material would achieve the desired expressiveness in my imagination. Perhaps I approached it too quickly without experimenting. In a conversation during my studies at the University of Marburg, which I can still remember well, Professor Kremers once accused me of not using searching as a methodic approach. On the other hand, a well-known artist is attributed as saying: "I don't search - I find". However, in small technical details I had to carefully work out the right material issues. This was the first time ever that I worked with semi-transparent materials on a project. A layer of paper partially painted with acryl formed the background. As a carrier for the drawing, I decided to use a heavy non-woven filament web, which in turn is covered by one or two layers of light, transparent web or thin Japanese paper. Why is that? Difficult to explain. The background only serves to set accents of light and shade. The carrier layer, that

is clear, must be somewhat transparent, have an irregular, living structure and be mechanically resistant. One drawback: corrections to this material are simply impossible. So always full concentration. The transparent cover materials, whether Japanese paper or non-woven web, create a refraction of light, which makes the drawings on the carrier layer softer, fuzzy, more distant, but also arouses curiosity. They also tempt you to look at the picture from a closer distance, but even then they remain impenetrable. It is not made easier for the viewer to grasp the content precisely; the knowledge lies solely in the attempt of approach and the imagination of the viewer.

Unfortunately, nowadays every artistic work has to be photographed for publication. This is where a real obstacle stands in the way of the four-layer structure. With many attempts I was able to recreate a substitute for the depth in the photos, but really only a substitute. I doubt that anyone who hasn't seen the original work can imagine any depth here. In addition, the slight movements of the individual layers change the overall picture or, better said, make it livelier. Nothing happens in the photo. But since this situation cannot be influenced, I have to come to terms with the status quo.

Johann Kralewski, December 2021