

oliver haefeli

"paintings in charcoal"

Main topic of his images from the series „la belle“ is the beauty of the human being. The beauty of its emotions, its complexity and expressively its sensuality. Delicate, seemingly photorealistic images arise of the most archaic material coal. Images of human beings with a soul shaped by life. This search for soul, emotion and sensuality is also significant for his other image-series, such as „la bête“, „la fleur“, or „Dieu“.

These images are not reproductions of photographs - yet they are not reproducing reality - but are results of extended development stages and intense studies. Although based on existing people, objective reality is not important. The artist's deliberately subjective construction of reality is exposed. And looking at these paintings, the viewer creates his own, subjective interpretation of yet another reality. This refers to, on a basic level, how the viewer generates in his mind a meaningful form out of what is fundamentally an arrangement of lighter and darker areas - a key issue of „gestalt-psychology“ - but more important, to what one interprets in terms of meaning, emotion and sensuality into the these images - an intense reflection of the beholders own reality.

The artist has developed an elaborate, highly demanding technique, which is inspired by the painting techniques of „the Old Masters“; specifically the depth generated by the Flemish Masters with their unique treatment of light and shadow and the finesse in tonal nuances of the „sfumato“ technique during the Italian Renaissance. There are no lines visible, everything is made of light and dark areas blending into each other. Unusual for charcoal, these areas are built up with glazing layers, one on top of each other. There may be over thirty layers to build one tone, thus creating the unusual depth and vividness of surface and the illusion of three-dimensionality - to an extent, that the eyes of "Seeka" seem to follow the viewer, wherever he moves. Brighter areas are treated negative. They are left gradually empty during the painting process. This is a specifically demanding feature, as with this technique charcoal does not allow for corrections, once it is applied. Even black areas are composed of layers of charcoal with a deliberate direction of strokes, different for each painting, thus generating depth of tone and distinct structure of surface.

Oliver Haefeli, born 1964, is an artist and designer. Among others, he was awarded winner of the „RedDot Design Award“, nominated „Design Price of Germany“ by the German Design Council and „Award of Excellence“ by the European Design Annual. His art and design objects have been shown in exhibits in Europe, Asia and America.

Awards

„RedDot Design Award Winner in Product Design“
„Nomination Design Prize of Germany“, German Design Council
„Award of Excellence“, The European Design Annual
Innovation Price of Germany, „Leuchte des Jahres/Lamp of the Year“

Art Exhibitions

2006 „Art One“, Zurich, Miami
2009 „ArtSeasons Gallery“, Zurich, Beijing, Seoul
2009 "Bogner-Museum", St. Moritz, Switzerland
2010 Galerie „Kunst im West“, Zurich
2012 "Koller Zurich", together with Culture-Attaché of Japan - for Fukushima
2014/15 Koller / Galerie „Kunst im West“, Zurich, solo exhibition
2015 Koller / Galerie „Kunst im West“, Zurich, group exhibition
2016 Koller / Galerie „Kunst im West“, Zurich, group exhibition
2018 NOMAD ART MOVEMENT / Bahnhofstrasse 3, Zurich

Design Exhibitions

2011 International Design Center Westphalen, Designmuseum Essen, Germany
2011/2 Red Dot Design Museum, Singapore

Education

Fine Arts, ArtCenterCollege of Design Pasadena

Architecture, ETH Zurich

University of Zurich and Pedagogic High School Zurich: Linguistics and Literature in German and English, Human History, History of Religion