



Eric Jan van de Geer. Textures, Structures and the Ordinary

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Standing in front of a fence or a hedge may convey a feeling of curiosity, but also of segregation, exclusion. You regard the fence as a barrier to signify ownership and to defend possession. Standing behind the fence or the hedge grants protection, a feeling of security and independence. Fences mark the border between areas which indicate different claims of property or conditions of usage. Thus, fences or hedges design personal rights and private interest. As there are different perspectives possible, the artist may take different visual angles.

At first sight, Eric Jan van de Geer's pictures do not offer this concrete significance, but they evoke vague sensitivity maybe even a feeling of irritation and defence reaction. They distinguish themselves by a speckled interface similar to a camouflage pattern. The artist's intention is to delay visual perception, then to create the experience of modified reality, and the fence or the hedge takes the important part in the dialogue between image and actuality. He uses these motives from ordinary life to involve the beholder in a situation of communication. To make this process understandable it is necessary to regard the artist's practical and technical procedure. The point of departure for his artificial work is colour photographs, Polaroid shots and films. At first sight the pictures are not recognizable as traditional photographs, that means that a fence or a hedge is not presented in a conventionally realistic form.

In a process of metamorphosis the artist penetrates into the micro-structures of the material, evoking the impression of a new object transformed into an abstract pictorial structure. The initial picture, by resolving the image into levels for printing on transparencies, using alienation affects and finally reuniting the levels of process, is transformed into a state of dissolution. By means of dissolving and layering, he induces perceptions of special depth juxtaposed to a two-dimensional accentuation of the surface brought about by a weighting of the colour and the structure. Spots, over or under exposure and surface irritation put the objective presence of the things in question and transform them into an abstract pictorial structure. The original picture is transported into a state of dissolution, a kind of movement determined by white and black, light and shadow. In other words: Zones of light and shadow draw the motive into an overarching rhythmical, nearly musical movement. Imprints implied with woodcutting techniques, stamps, painting or silk-screen printing intensify the feel for the texture of the photograph as a sort of skin, a diaphragm. By dissolution of colours and structures, Eric Jan van de Geer induces a new picture of reality determined by aesthetic categories. The colour white plays an extraordinary part because it makes it possible to extinguish particular elements of the object in question in order to reconstruct the whole. In this way he realizes a process of time, that means "Stirb und werde!" (Goethe) evoking the eternal cycle of growth and decay.

Closely connected with these single photographs is the sequence of Polaroid pictures which evoke the impression of movement and the idea of action in time, still intensified by the medium film, adapted to perpetuate these developments. Analysing and penetrating the microstructure of reality without reproducing it, Eric Jan van de Geer introduces a deeper understanding regardless whether his position is in front or behind the fence or the hedge. By striving to assimilate the perception of the image emotionally and by different senses, he is following a nearly philosophical concept reminding us of Plato's 'Cave Allegory': His works are close to those images generated by concurrences of lights and shadows, bonding the beholders in a communication between object and intellect, in order to discern patterns, vestiges, remnants of reality and truth.