

GLOBAL ART

opening April 23rd 2008

Fré Ilgen

Welcome

In name of my wife Jacqueline and the "Checkpoint Ilgen" team I gladly welcome you!

Introduction

Before I will mention some things myself to you regarding the "Checkpoint Ilgen" I first wish to give the floor to a person, who is a great example in the artworld of someone who has both her strong own opinion about art while simultaneously she never lost her curiosity, besides – quite important to our current theme – she has a sincere interest in both western and nonwestern art. By the way she is also the person responsible for Jacqueline and me to discover Berlin for ourselves some 13-14 years ago by showing my own work in a groupshow at the time, and for providing reasons to have been back ever since until we decided to live in this exciting cultural centre: **Mayen Beckmann**

"Checkpoint Ilgen" in general

We live in a very exciting and everchanging world. There has never been so much art around, never so many galleries, art fairs, etc.. Major shifts happen within the artworld. We cannot simply say that this or that art from this or that country should not be taken seriously. We still believe in a pyramid construction of the artscene though it is more like a vast ocean. Already for too long in general there seems to be only a discussion about art in relation to its financial value and not in the original interest or pleasure in art: the experience works of art offer you.

The "cure": find courage in the fact that the sheer overload of art and overload of opportunistic market endeavours lead to one thing: you are back to your OWN opinion again. The "medicine": be curious, trust and allow enough time for your own eyes and brain to focus on the work of art! No need to first understand the concept or the meaning of the work. No need to like everything. No need to understand everything. But be open and curious for new experiences nevertheless. Curiosity and focus of attention will lead you to wish to know more about what attracts you. At that moment knowledge becomes obviously important.

Jacqueline and I have initiated our modest initiative to offer a platform for artlovers, art critics, collectors, artists, art dealers (sincere gallerists are also primarily art lovers, a fact often forgotten) to meet in a relaxed and informal environment in the wish and hope this will provide all of us the courage to speak about art as a personal experience again in stead of what we think we are required to find good!

"Checkpoint Ilgen" more specifically

There are artists that have reasons to present their personal views about politics, social circumstances, tabus, or who wish to shock, be radical, controversial or merely cute or entertaining. We present art with no clear linear message, which acknowledges that every human being has to individually cope with their own opinions, problems and personal suffering. It is what art has been capable of providing through all ages. First and foremost, the visual quality of the artwork will engage your vision – your eyes and brain – to gradually scan and roam over the work, through such a process your mind, your attention, will be focussed and your thoughts will be distracted. While a work of art focusses our attention it becomes part of our thinking, of our being. Immediate perception is the initial step in appreciating a work of art, while knowledge, and associations based on one's personal life, are quick to step in the process. This requires art which has both a high quality appearance and multi-layered deeper meaning.

"Global Art"

"Global Culture" is a phenomenon currently widely discussed, often meant to criticize global economy and global marketing strategies to threaten "local cultures" and change the large cultural diversity into some general superficial and uniform "McDonald" culture. On the other hand, still too often non-western contemporary art is viewed as "ethnic" and not on equal terms as contemporary western art. We classify before we really look.

The term "Global Art" is a term I have opted to indicate artists who do not suffer from any loss of identity by globalization, but who create art which is highly idiosyncratic though simultaneously very accessible to viewers from very different places in the world. Such artists found a way to express their existence in the world as a synthesis between their individual specific cultural roots and their participation in global culture. Maybe less radical but still more exceptional in their substantial meaning.

At the entrance you will find copies of the report of the discussion I organized a year ago in the Sundaram

Tagore Gallery in New York on "Global Art" and in which Anil, Karin and Mayen also feature. You are welcome to take a copy home. You will find that we are still at the start of acknowledging all complexities involved in thinking globally in art!

I do hope Mayen Beckmann's and my short introduction will stimulate you to look long enough at each work of art to allow your eyes and brain to adjust and interact with these wonderful pieces. Besides, I hope some of you will talk with Cristina and Anil about their works and with Karin about Ali Hassan's powerful paintings. As last thought I hope to win more of you for the very informal discussion we will have coming Sunday starting around 2 in the afternoon.

Now finally back to earth, we go to food, drinks and casual talks. I hope you'll forgive me that I kindly ask you to not automatically stand with your backs to the artworks and discuss worldly matters but to attempt to discuss about things said and what you think of the artworks presented. Thank you for your patience.

Fré Ilgen,
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