

Ingo Baumgarten:

ARTIST STATEMENT (2017)

My main medium is painting, consciously keeping in mind all its connotations and traditions.

As all paintings, also mine unfold their effects on different levels.

First, there is the aesthetic level of colors, forms and compositions, which shape in their combination the aesthetic experience of the spectator. Even when this aesthetic sensual involvement with art-works is often not clearly reflected, it is the visual appeal of the work, which attracts the attention of a spectator, and opens up the way for the visual-artistic communication.

Further, there is the level of motives, contents of the painting: spectators can usually recognize easily elements of their own visual experiences of their surroundings, however the choice of details, the perspectives or the viewpoint might appear shifted. That corresponds well to my conceptual approach which is well described with the term *visual anthropology*. That term is defined as "*the exploration of everyday-live, culture and society with the methods of participating observation and its transformation in images and artworks*". I discovered this term and its definition, after working for a long time in this manner. Already during my studies, more than 30 years ago, I wanted my work to be *relevant* by being linked to society and reality. Therefore, I based my work on *my* firsthand observations of society and reality, using myself as a representative model.

The starting point of my work has always been personal perceptions of my close environment, followed by the analyzes of functions and relationships. The expression of a personal view guaranties a certain level of authenticity, which is an important value in art.

Since long time I choose detail-aspects of my surroundings as the motives for my work, things and places which I find significant, typical and determining for specific environment and its atmosphere.

I deal with different themes and motives according to my aesthetic, cultural, social, and historical interests. In the last years, I developed a strong focus on architecture and its appearance in everyday live. I am especially interested in the implicated ideals and ideologies of architectural forms and their change over the time.

I want to confront the spectator as direct as possible with my views upon the motives and themes. Therefore, I generally omit consciously the human figure because a figure, with its relation to its surrounding, would function as a mediator in between.

By their composition, choice of color and by the expression of my subjective perception, my paintings are sometimes irritating the spectators seeing habits. If that causes for the spectator a reflection about his own relationship to the subject of the work, the artistic communication had worked well.

If the relationship to the motives is missing, the aesthetic qualities of the work should independently unfold their effect.

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