

Rhythm, Statics, and Vibration Visual Parameters in Christian Eder's Work

by Hartwig Knack

Christian Eder's latest works are planned in perfect geometry, and bear within them the ideas of concrete and constructive art alongside hints of op art. The activity and cooperation of the observer play an important role in understanding the wall paintings as well as the three-dimensional *Ovalformationen* (Oval Formations). Here, the basic mechanisms of human perception are addressed. Approaching the canvases and sculptures from different angles evokes different shadows and color perceptions. Certain color combinations and a self-contained, formal, linear execution cause the motif to oscillate, prompting an illusion of spatial depth to emerge from the two-dimensional surface of the painting.

The artist has long taken an interest in the surface-bonded panel painting of the early Middle Ages, and also gathers inspiration for his paintings from the study of archeology and the ancient architecture of temples and pillared structures. These horizontal and vertical architectural elements, and the rhythmic interplay of their lines, evoke image structures from Christian Eder's work. These can be intensely colored, or black and white, and begin to vibrate intensively under observation. Nature also sometimes supplies the basis for his creative images. An accompanying collection of photographs depicts details showing rows of trees, lines of sight suffused with light, and reflections upon the surfaces of any pools and drops of water.

Rhythm and Vibrancy

Lines, next to color the main element of Christian Eder's painting, are actually the foundation of all human creation. They are what make life what it is, a symbol of life, a metaphor and reflection of calm and rationality, of time and infinity.

Using oil and acrylic painting techniques, Eder creates grids and ordered, parallel line systems composed mainly along vertical, horizontal, and diagonal axes. Each composition is color coordinated and geometrically formed right down to the minutest detail. However, this doesn't mean that

entire designs are executed according to a specific image configuration pattern. The work process leaves ample free space for spontaneity, and allows the artist to integrate unexpected ideas into the composition. Sketches and drawings are always created as a sort of contemplation prior to, or parallel to, the painting process, but these pieces are not meant to be seen as finished or independent works of art in any sense. They aren't necessarily waiting to be executed in oil or acrylic, yet their appearance and statement of meaning stands autonomously.

The extensive series titled *Strings* explores the potentials of sensory perception. The broad bands of the background tend to be dark, often in shades of grey to black and seen by the artist as non-colors, contrast with the fine, parallel, white line formations that are set upon the surface of the painting like lights. The eye of the observer is challenged. An oscillating play of light and shadow emerges, seeming to flicker, and in many cases seems to be made even denser by colored, web-like structures. The crossings, the well thought-out nuances of coloration and their placement next to, over, and under each other seem to rouse the lines of the entire surface of the painting. It is set into motion and begins to pulsate. The lines become colors.

Through the rhythm of the lines and the separation distance of the strips, the artist creates an intensification or diminution of the optical phenomenon described above. In other works in the series, discreet shifts in line placement cause visual irritation and interference. Spaces and surfaces start to crumble, concepts such as precision, near and far, movement, stringency of form, and openness are played through, an intention of concrete art.

Framework and Order

Eder's framework and grid structures, which he defines as a system of coordinates, serve above all to describe the space of the image and to hold its color and geometry together. These are made denser to account for a certain complexity on the one hand, and to avoid losing sight of the initial idea of the imagery on the other.

Tree trunks captured in photographs push vertically up into the air; horizontal cornice molding and friezes of historic buildings, together with vertical architectural elements such as pillars and columns, serve to divide

and structure the walls and façades of buildings – these things find their way into Eder’s paintings along an abstract path. The even grids that emerge from this take on an exceptionally sensual quality. The light that falls through the leaves onto the tree trunks, or the broken fragments of column fluting from Greek temples, over 2,000 years old, reappear in his paintings in a freely fashioned translation.

Surface and Space

Taking off on his *Formations* and *Oval Formations* series of artworks, Eder leaps from two-dimensional panel painting to three-dimensional sculpture, beginning to develop relief-like wall art that marks the extension of the artistic surface into the room. Following his principle of painterly illusionist layering, the artist mounts identical, individual ellipses painted with lines in a dense pattern, overlapping or next to one another, creating sometimes neat and orderly, sometimes seemingly random protrusions. The staggering to front and back creates – differently than on a canvas – actual light and shadow situations, which the artist uses to discover the proportionalities and sensually perceivable expressions of surface and space. In many of these works, Eder uses painted lines along PVC cords to join “oval groups” together with single ellipses across a certain distance, thus creating a unified work. This makes the ovals seem to expand, and the parallel shadows of the PVC cords cast their marks across the white of the walls.

Basic sight processes and the perception of color define Christian Eder’s experimental parameters, which he implements in his art to challenge, irritate, and stimulate the viewer, inciting them to new thought processes and sensitizing their awareness of space, surface, and movement.