

Oliver Kropf

Oliver Kropf's works are structured in innumerable layers. The start might be a coloured coating of the canvas to prime it with a ground, but only seldom can anything be seen of this after completion of the picture. He works on this grounding systematically, with the aid of a projector places his figures on the expressively physical painted background and then starts combining them with the layers under them. The finished picture often has a mystical effect, in part even sombre, the way the figures merge into this landscape and yet mostly seem out of place. The brush strokes he sets testify to a power and strength but at the same time also to the sheer joy of painting per se. The spontaneous gesture, the evident traces of the brushwork are usually invested as well in the protagonists, who are always male. These frequently concern typical, cliché-loaded male roles. The hunter with aimed rifle on the chase, the warrior drawing his bow at the gallop on his horse, or the dictator leading his people. And yet these strong men are vulnerable. The warrior seems to despair suddenly and buries his head in his hands, the clown loses his flair as a joker and himself seems harassed and fearful...

This is where Oliver Kropf's painting throws up questions. What's happening here? Why is this figure standing in front of this seemingly empty, ruined house? Whom will this yelling man swinging a baseball bat beat up next? Trepidation and dark forebodings may well up in the observer at these questions, but when the painting is viewed in its self-reference the painterly quality is yet again pre-eminent.

Oliver Kropf has assumed a thrilling and refreshing position as an artist. He integrates his objects into the painted background like a collage, combining mysticism and pure painting in his works. And when a red figure flies through the celestial sphere, the artist sees himself in it, constantly helter-skeltering up and down, but still free-flying in airy heights.

Eva Maria Bechter