

Talks

# Interview with Clara Brörmann | Federica Schiavo Gallery

**"Yes, I believe art can carry certain experiences, moods and issues. But it is always up to the artist and the recipient, if this communication turns out fertile".**

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**Marco Arrigoni**

Il 31 gennaio è stata inaugurata alla Galleria Federica Schiavo di Milano la mostra personale Horizonte dell'artista tedesca Clara Brörmann. Sono state esposte tele inedite in cui gestualità, forme e colori erano i connotati primi tesi alla realizzazione di ogni lavoro, quasi riduzione degli emblemi stessi del dipingere: medium e immagine, sospesi tra una composizione coerente e un gesto disgregante.

"You are looking at the sea. Standing at the shore, just at the edge of the water and watching the horizon you feel weightless. There is no ground in your focus. There is neither top nor bottom, but the sky and the sky reflected on the water. Then you try to perceive this space, your eyes wandering along the dividing line – the horizon. It is impossible to grasp the total of the space at once. You will need many glances. Can painting bear this kind of spacial experience? Then we are talking about abstract landscape paintings, aren't we? How can I possibly create such paintings?"

A horizontal line evokes space. With symmetry and doubled images I am setting up this line. The diptychs and the reflected canvases in the exhibition are built around a central mirror axis. Taking this axis as horizon, the paintings can create fantastic landscapes in your mind.

Through outlining an abstract, pictorial space I want to share an experience of landscape with the viewer. Although, of course, the paintings still remain paintings: images, created objects". Clara Brörmann

ATPdiary ha posto alcune domande all'artista.

**ATP: Let's start from the title: why Horizonte?**

Clara Brörmann: Horizonte, (horizons) is the title of a smaller series of diptychs included in the show at Federica Schiavo Gallery. Each consists of two paintings installed above one another with a dividing gap in the middle. And I thought it would also make a good title for the whole show. "Horizonte" has a double meaning: first of all, it refers to the most basic geometric arrangement of a landscape image – the sky and the ground separated by a horizontal line.

Secondly, as a metaphor "horizon" can stand for a search for new perspectives, for opening up your mind.

**ATP: You say: "The paintings still remain paintings: images, created objects". Can you explain why?**

C.B.: I say that, because I am fascinated how paintings as objects can carry so much meaning.

Painting is projection. A painted portrait is not a person, but a man-made object, an artefact. Still, you can see the person in it and maybe even empathise with it. And that is exactly the magical thing about painting: you can put a whole world into it, although it is just a canvas with traces of colour.

**ATP: You describe your work as "abstract". In what meaning do you use that word?**

C.B.: The content of the work is abstract (the material, the paint and the canvas is pretty concrete).

So in this show, for example, I am concerned with landscape. Here, I am not depicting a defined environment like a bavarian forest or my uncle's garden, but I am busy with a more general idea of space and how to put that into my work. In several painting series I have also been busy with the matter of time. Can you for example see the time, that is put into the realisation of a painting, when it is finished? Or can you even create a different sense of time in a painting than in any other medium? These abstract thoughts are interesting, I think. It's a wonderful challenge. Maybe, abstraction is more about putting questions, than giving answers.

**ATP: For you artworks can give the total experience and involvement such as nature and human relationships? After all, it's you that ask: "Can painting bear this kind of spacial experience?"...**

C.B.: Yes, I believe art can carry certain experiences, moods and issues. But it is always up to the artist and the recipient, if this communication turns out fertile. And it stays open, how much intellectual and emotional content each individual puts into it. If you have a more abstract topic, like the experience of space, it can also be quite difficult to communicate it. So, if I ask this question, I set myself the task to try it out.

**ATP: You create diptychs with a central mirror axis. What does it represent?**

C.B.: The idea came up, when I was playing around with two equal paintings in the studio. I was interested in the double- image, what happens when you take two equally painted canvases for a diptych. I put them up next to each other, so it was like a mirror, or a repetition. You automatically start to compare them, watching it feels a bit like a game.

Then I tried out to install them above one another – you immediately get a different image space. And I thought, how interesting that is, how a horizontal line in the centre of an image completely changes its impact. And at the same time I was reminded of that situation that I describe in the press release: the landscape at the sea side. When you stand at the shore and only see the sky and the sea, which reflects the sky. So in the end the idea was, to take this very simple structure – two equal paintings above one another – and call them abstract landscapes.

**ATP: Can you describe how do you create your paintings? What is your usual procedure (if there is one)?**

C.B.: Usually, I work on groups of paintings, most of the time these are planned for upcoming exhibitions. It takes around three to five month, until they are finally finished.

First of all, I need a basic idea, a concept, like a theme that interests me at the time. Then I can make out the format and number of works I need and I can start building canvases. The painting process itself is comparatively slow. I develop the paintings step by step, going through an ever changing procedure of applying and removing paint. The image will be changed several times, often, I sand or tear off colour and overpaint parts of the work. So I never know until the end, what the result will look like.

**ATP: In the press release we can read: “The numerous steps in the painting process generate a temporal and spatial simultaneity in which the viewer is free to intrude into, in search for a personal interpretation**

**that eventually places the abstract forms into a familiar context". Could you clarify these process?**

C.B.: Maybe, because of the way I work, there is more than one way to access the paintings when you stand in front of it. I think, in the end you can actually see that the work underwent several steps of decision making and applying paint. And this creates a specific, multi-layered image space and image time, which can invite the viewer to search for his own, personal perspective. But I guess, you should rather ask the person, who wrote these words, about her/ his impression.