

We encounter stairs countless times a day, in the morning at the front door, on the way to work, in every building. They hold a special aesthetic and an astonishing variety of forms. In her latest series of works entitled *step by step*, Sandra Tröger is particularly intrigued by this architectural detail.

A central instrument of Tröger's work is her photo camera. With it, the graduate of the Munich Academy of Fine Arts sets off to discover images outside of her viewing habits. Like Ellsworth Kelly or Raoul de Keyser, she fills and shapes her inner sketchbook through the camera's viewfinder. Some motifs already convey their valid message as photographs, some inspire the artist to transform them into a painted image.

In the paintings of the *step by step* series, the structure of the stairs allows Sandra Tröger to arrange her colours on the canvas. First, the idea of a colour resonance emerges in her head and then further develops directly on the canvas, without any preliminary draft. Then the composition of the nuances begins: Tröger mixes pigments and binding agents to obtain the highest purity and brilliance of colour. Each mixture is unique. The interaction of the various tones – whether harmonious or not – is of central importance.

The artist takes her time, proceeds with extreme sensitivity and consideration. If a colour does not blend harmoniously into the overall picture, it is painted over, but it remains perceptible as a hidden layer. Edges, drawn with tape or a flat spatula, frame the individual sections without ever becoming too strict: the paint repeatedly breaks out, crosses the borders or throws itself in the form of spatters onto the adjacent areas. These are traces that are important to the artist as markers of the creation process and are explicitly permitted by her as a controlled coincidence.

Form and colour change priority in the course of the work. Tröger's objective, however, is to bring the two aspects into a sensitive, carefully thought-out balance in the finished picture. She weighs, checks, composes, corrects, paints over, deletes until the work is finished. *Step by step*.

In earlier works there was no procedure of such complexity. The works from 2013 are structured like a four-part window whose frames and glasses are characterized by irregularities, superimpositions and transparencies, and still clearly bear a gestural characteristic. From this point on, Tröger's painting becomes increasingly calmer and more planar. This development results in pairs of paintings from 2015 that explore subtle differences in colour and their relation to one another and are reminiscent of Josef Albers' paintings. Works from 2017 show elements of almost the same size in different colours, arranged in a grid, but with irregularities, slightly shifted and tilted. Their movements are restricted by a strong frame, only isolated paint runs cross these borders. Tröger retrieved the composition of these abstract forms from her immanent repertoire, which she now expands by seeking and finding new perspectives through the camera lens.

All aspects of Sandra Tröger's development enrich her work in an enthralling way. In her personality as well as in her activities her will to create and design becomes apparent. It is a delightful fusion of the artistic disciplines of photography, painting, architecture and design that Tröger lives by and that translates into her remarkable oeuvre.

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