



CLAUDIA CHASELING
GALERIE SCHLASSGOART

REFLECTIONS ON WAVES AND LIQUID SCAPES

Claudia Chaseling's work currently circles around three major themes, which she refers to as scapes, zero, and pools. In scapes she works to present landscapes in a new manner challenging naturalized perceptual expectations and implied laws of mechanics or optics. She draws inspiration from her imagination, but also from dreams, memories, and 'real' places, which are superimposed upon each other in partly transparent layers. The emergence of any authoritative perspective is precluded as Chaseling's scapes remain fluid – they constantly merge, transform, change, and dissolve. In zero Chaseling's theme is the inevitable and constant tension between the actual and the virtual – between what is, what was, and what might become. She focuses on moments when beginnings becomes indistinguishable from endings – big bang moments of enormous destructiveness, yet also of intense creativity providing new forms and new lives. In pools Chaseling approaches reflections on fluid surfaces, which she employs to dissolve the concrete forms of figurative motives. According to the artist, perspectives on or through water constitute a layering of light, movement, and matter. She sets out to explore these in a series of major paintings.

In the present exhibition at the Galerie Schlusgoart, Chaseling's artwork and the architecture of the place – work and frame – engage each other in a productive manner. Chaseling's paintings are put on display in two large rooms, which are divided by an atrium in the middle. This atrium becomes both barrier and connecting threshold as it enables a view from one room into the other, yet somehow refracts and estranges the gaze through its large windows. This architectural setting invites for

explorations of multiple perspectives on the exhibited artworks and enables approaches to conceptual dimensions beyond a painting's surface. What is brought to emerge through this particular configuration of work and frame is a fragmented and merely temporarily stabilized point of view – a precarious order constantly open for a productive subversion from a constitutive outside.

The presented works by Chaseling are challenging. They constantly disperse the gaze of the spectator into different and often competing points of view. In what could be called her 'post-referential' paintings, real and imaginary places, filtered through memory, are interconnected and layered upon one another in novel ways. Landscapes appear without horizons or concise perspective. Reflections and refractions of dreams, memories, and concrete places are layered on the canvas and form complex configurations in deliberate breach of the laws of physics or optics. Since according to Chaseling, her enduring sources of inspiration are waves and water – both surface and space, reflective yet creative, dynamic and stable – the emergent configurations could be termed liquid scapes. Her investigations into fluidity – the non-static and processual – bring Chaseling's work into proximity to for instance Zygmunt Baumann's analysis of the present condition.

The works brought together in the present exhibition consistently escape determinate forms of reading. In my view they should not, and it could indeed be possible to argue they cannot, be contained inside their frames and treated as merely conveying some decontextualised symbolic content. Chaseling's liquid scapes have to be explored

in depth on strictly individual terms. Her technique of combining egg tempera paint and dry colour pigments, partly over layered with oil paint creates a transparency of the layered surfaces. This transparency enables the viewer to venture into the work, to explore unknown dimensions, reemerge, and again disappear diving below the surface. Such explorations of the depths of these works always allow for a retracing of the surface, yet never for a return to an originary point of departure, or an authoritative locus of enunciation. Like a Deleuzian rhizome Chaseling's work is without beginning or end, constantly subverting the discourses constructed around it, and always eluding final fixation in one or another determinate frame.

In the present exhibition Chaseling employs and subtly subverts motifs typical for modernist artworks. Monumental architecture, industrial buildings, machines, roads, or bridges are recurrent features of her paintings. However, through her peculiar technique of layering and her way of dispersing perspective these become estranged and decontextualized. As such, massive buildings seemingly dissolve as mere reflections in water, bridges seem to end in the open sky, and monuments appear below liquid surfaces glittering in light. According to the artist, it is her intention to explore and contemplate on the aporia of modernity – the inherently contradictory relationship between nature and culture, between what is often referred to as civilization and its precultural other. This overarching theme has developed throughout the years and provides Chaseling's works with both apparently timeless relevance, and a concrete

grounding in today's socio-political debates, for instance regarding the destructive potentials and lacking sustainability of economic orders vested in limitless growth, boundless consumption and ever increasing speed. Exploring Chaseling's liquid scapes means to become aware of the uncanny presence of a deprived other in our relationship with nature. Emerging from below the surfaces is a haunting spectre revealing the dark underbelly of modernity and 'progress'.

Holger Pötzsch



scape 1, 2009, 145 by 145 cm, egg tempera and oil on canvas



scape 5, 2010, 560 by 160 cm,
egg tempera and oil on canvas

