

David's world

Jolanta Trebacz (Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin)

„I have never had the feeling that I could achieve anything with paintings and drawings, they are just the last pounding of the waves regarding my sensations towards the world. Somehow I do, of course, hope that they show the essential. I might, however, be wrong.“ That's how I met David Dibiah. His art is the immediate expression of what moves him as an artist. In all his creative phases drawing has been the preferred experimental field to develop and work through his ideas. With pencil and paintbrush, with carbon and pastel chalks he fixes impressions, clarifies his ideas and finally bears down on those visual expressions that are deeply ingrained in his memory. Stroke by stroke, sheet by sheet he plays through all possible variants of finding an image, not least by examining the works of his most important model (Vincent van Gogh). What's special about David is the fact that he has never been afraid of colors. He does not only depict the traditional African continent but also the interchange between African and European art. His art works refer to that moment in art history, when the art of Africa meets the German art scene of the 21st century. This reciprocal relation between the two continents can be sensed in his image concept. David: „When I draw, I step out of time. I am in genuine time, I enter a different sphere. I live very strongly and in the awareness of events that happened thousands of years before us. I am not concerned with a political way of thinking because my way of thinking transcends social forms. It is true that art is an adventure, every new work presents itself as a wonderful albeit not necessarily serene adventure.“

David varies his motives. Sexuality is among his preferred topics because it promises life and fun. „Art does not affect changes, we have to forfeit that idea,“ says David. „We live in a time when it is important to ask questions. Not gloatingly so that the other person, who we want to answer, gets into difficulties but in a way that questions things and occurrences.“

Although David lives and honors the cultural heritage of his fathers and prime fathers, he also fervently wishes to contribute to the understanding among people. Again he finds inspiration in an old master. This, however, is not a return to romanticism or religious ideas. David has his own ideas about color; he deals with color in these current times of grayness, puts colors in opposition. „I have told myself that I am a painter and must therefore work with colors, must bring aggressiveness into it and take it away again,“ David reveals. Black, white and red dominate his works, just like sorrow, pain, love, hatred, joy and fear are the dominating feelings of human beings. In search for his own style David also employs other materials like the grid.

The year 2006 was an important turning point in David's artistic development. Looking for his own picture language he left naturalistic and expressive representations. His play with words and images is the result of philosophical reflections on the state of a painting and its relation to mathematics, politics and reality. Therefore it is no coincidence that his last two paintings are gridded.

In his art, David Amaechi Dibiah is not ostensibly searching for pictorial sensations, but looking for the present-day, the problematic, the essential. He brings human experiences, observations and efforts into his art. Painting is a process of self-discovery to him.