

“Like a recipe, suddenly something is created”

Alexandra Beusterien, Art historian, September 2006, Berlin

As a child predominantly a tinker and handicrafts but non-artistic-child. His Mother helped many times when in art class homework was to be handed in, above all in painting and drawing. With his art teacher in high school he drew and sketched for hours in the Berliner Zoo and the botanical garden upon spontaneous request, “so today we are going to paint the tropical rainforest.”

His early works still carry strong politicized features. They predominantly reflect societies decline and the political atmosphere of the 1980's again and again. Troublesome subject matter such as experiments on animals, the increasing destruction of the environment get powerfully and repulsively implemented. The critical realism near, his paintings seem to scream with wild colours to shake up the viewer: “look what's happening be careful with your environment!” Later grew the realization that concentrated suffering evokes aversion and distance with the audience. “Only with this destruction I couldn't go any further. I wanted to show the viewer a positive path!” Away from a traumatizing resignation into a digestible picture statement.

In the eighties the first montage came into being out of newspaper. That was followed by collagen on sand-background, in the nineties with hand-scooped laid-paper, tissue and Japan paper; then in 1999 relief collagen on wood. The crucial point of his fascination for paper was his stay in New York in 1995 where he discovered an El Dorado for paper freaks; a shop with hundreds of different types of paper, some structured like human skin, others resembling bark. Each piece of paper that he incorporates in his works has its own history. The use of paper indicated the global intention of the artist; paper collagen speak a worldwide uniform understandable language. At home in Berlin he meticulously archives things brought back from his journeys; paper of various types and sizes. These souvenirs often wait several years for their usage. In his atelier the paper mounds are clearly structured and neatly stacked. The organising hand of the former archaeology student is unmistakable. Heinrich termed himself early as a loner, and even today he always works alone at home in his atelier; working with an association unthinkable. The pieces of paper are often irregularly torn and glued on with bone-glue or epoxy-glue. Not only while applying the oil colour, but while applying the lacquer he works old masterly; the hand-scooped laid-paper pieces are applied layer for layer on the picture carrier upon which which then the thin fluid colour layer lies. This play with different paper types creates mysterious surface areas. Large fibre organic materials, memories of braid-weave, weather worn stone and cracked dried earth invites ones touch.

His works are abstract. Not a single subject is precisely depicted, still however there is a figurative reference available; mostly landscape and city scenery get deciphered. Noticeable is the increased geometrical form language with the imaged dusty alleyways, and the contorted corners of Cape Town. Yet occasionally amorphous forms also come up. They suggest a vague human presence. The colours have the effect of being tranquil and withdrawn; blue in every tone and shade, earthen colours, white and gray tones. They all radiate well balanced calm and tranquillity. Unmistakeable is Heinrich's preference for colour squares of a Marc Rothkos.

From 1995 to 2001 Heinrich did extensive travelling to New York, the South West of the USA, Turkey and longer stays in Cape Town. The African collages reflect the strength of the

dark continent again and again. His peaceful surfaces seem to vibrate under the African sun. One believes to recognize wall projections, dusty road surfaces, hut projections full of nooks and crannies in the steaming sunlight. However a large interpretation margin is important for his sensory experiences; of fragrances, half faded memory shreds, sounds and tones to determine the picture. Important is the ease to absorb different impressions, and in his atelier with oil and fine paper turn them into an art work. Like a recipe something suddenly comes into being.