

# Neue Zürcher Zeitung

Zürcher Kultur, 8/19/2004

## Visit at the studio of Joachim Bandau

By Angelika Affentranger-Kirchrath

The German artist Joachim Bandau, regularly exhibiting at the Gallery Mark Mueller is working in Switzerland during the summer months. 2 years ago he bought a loft in an old warehouse and uses it as his studio.

Whereas Swiss travel to France and Italy during the summer, Joachim Bandau comes to Stäfa and enjoys the breeze and the special light. In his studio he finds the ideal conditions for his watercolors that seem to consist of light and dark, air and light. In his other studio in Aachen he creates the sculptures. Despite the esthetic proximity of the sculpture and watercolors, they are in need of a clearly separated work process. The geographical distance between the studios helps to separate this processes. The watercolors started to origin in 1983 and have since been refined in content and technique. Gestural movements in earlier watercolors have become subtle planar constructions, devoid of colors, making thereby a whole range of grey-tones visible.

Bandau paints the watercolors with a Japanese goat-brush in horizontal and vertical directions. Overlapping paint creates dark spaces. Dark lines appear where the color planes touch. The watercolors seem to keep the artist busy physically and mentally, as he is in constant need to change position. Just like a dancer he has to find a suitable rhythm. Working in such a way Joachim Bandau is getting into a meditative state of mind.

Bandau perceives a close connection between the watercolors and Baroque-Music. The way the watercolors fade into each other is similar to musical tones. Perceiving the work it is sometimes uncertain, whether the color planes are staged on top of each other, one can almost count them. It is hard to say whether they are made of watercolor or exist in a fine material way. They dissolve into each other, are inseparable and it becomes impossible to define their tonal weight. Everything is under the law of Crescendo and Descendo, light and air are flooding the picture-plane.

Directly inspired by the studio-situation are new watercolors suggesting the motive of a glass cube. Ether bodies and architectural elements seem to be codependent on each other. They seem inseparable; their suggestive forms cannot be taken out of the context. They are illogically logical. Despite the laws of Minimal Art, irrational intuition is allowed to linger inside the work. The formal language of the work is reduced; each watercolor is part of a bigger system. But within this system the single work never reaches fulfillment. That is why Bandeau especially favors the watercolors that break with the laws of this system. By following these unexpected traces, Bandeau discovers surprising solutions, renewing and keeping alive the work cycle.