

I love art

Carsten Fock is a conjuror of his own self: he is the prism in which world and myth, thought and life, music and language, text and image, expression and obsession meet, diffract, overlap, enhance and alienate. His pictures become blurry and indistinct and materialise in front of our eyes as dancing gestures. Carsten Fock thus creates a precision that emerges from intuition, revealing the innate power of colour and material. It is painting in the truest sense of the word.

Carsten Fock's oeuvre is surprisingly consistent and yet constantly new. Evolving over the years, it has been shown in exhibitions with evocative titles such as *God is in the House*, *Scendere a terra*, *Glaube und Verzweiflung*, *Die Würde und der Mut* or *Kosmos der Angst*. In his paintings and drawings, Fock modifies select motifs, texts and out-of-place phrases from the mythic world of pop and philosophy, the private and the political, art history and his own biography. Painting is an existential act: it is the art that keeps him alive and the life that presents his art.

If this sounds somewhat serious, then it is accurate and incorrect at the same time, because for all the drama (both inner and outer) that Fock's paintings often suggest, they also express a fatalistic cheerfulness that only someone who has seen darkness can truly achieve. His humour, which frequently extends to the linguistic innuendo of his exhibition titles (*I love art – really?*), conveys a pleasant volatility to his works, a state of suspension that can be grasped as movement.

Anyone is free to completely surrender to this movement, as Carsten Fock's paintings are often expansive. Even if they are of a small format, his works extend over and beyond the canvas or paper, pushing towards three-dimensionality with an incredible energy that comes directly from the artist himself. At the same time, however, the images are always more than mere gestural abstraction. They are part of a story whose narrator apparently went missing some time ago, leaving fragments for the viewer to piece together with their own personal prism in any which way.

So there is Fock, the emphatic artist who chooses his references with love, who practises admiration and always stays, or is forced to stay, at a certain distance. And then there is Fock, the sceptic artist who observes the course of the world and who sees his painting as a possible way to capture these changes, for himself, in themselves, in the collision of inside and outside. The union of both, emphasis and scepticism, forms the foundations of Fock's world view and is also the basis of a political position rooted within his work.

Indeed, Carsten Fock's paintings are always a form of protest, a passionate protest, of passion protesting against a world that has succumbed to the status quo, against carelessness, apathy and mindlessness, against giving in, against giving up, against the simplification that is so dangerous because it evens out reactionary paths in art as much as in society. The emphatic art as characterised by Fock evolves into an art that confronts acceptance – also on a political level.

Within the scope of Fock's creative work, therefore, the image of a time emerges – a time seized by flashes of beauty and of horror, pervaded by the powers of the past and the future, and shaped by art, commerce and capital. If Carsten Fock were an ideologue, he would write pamphlets. But he is an artist, a worker, a tradesman and a lover. He is driven by a desire that is seen in his paintings – and so he sends with these images signals to himself, out of himself, to keep himself conscious and awake, and us with him as well.

text: Georg Diez