

Clara Brörmann's paintings are aesthetic objects that counter the digital status quo of rapid image scrolling. With her work Brörmann insists on the autonomy of painting as a medium. One source of this moment of resistance is the sheer physicality of the images, the various layers and elevations of the surface, which are the outcome of a "long, complex [working] process"¹ in the studio. In this sense Brörmann's paintings become concrete by revealing the painter's work to the viewer and also making it readable to some extent. Cracks disclose hidden layers of colour. The raised surface structure and the alternation between glossy and matt segments invite speculation as to the tools used and the materiality of the colours – and the artist's use of acrylic filler. "You have to be clear about the formal qualities of the paint application," says Brörmann.

Brörmann conceives her paintings in series such as "Lantern Paintings" (2020), "Turning Point Paintings, (2018–2020), "Head Paintings" (2014–2020), "Torso Paintings" (2022) and "Symmetria" (2022) . Each of these feature varieties of clearly defined geometric and dynamic overall compositions and repeated motifs. In the most recent paintings the artist references figurative forms, pointing to the roots of all her work. "My painting comes from figuration,"² Brörmann says, by which she also means that the human body is central both to the production and the sensory perception of her work. Her art connects the gestures of painting with the gestures of viewing. Brörmann's paintings function like playful apparatuses that allow the artist to share her knowledge of material, light and colour with her audience. The raised surfaces feel like a subtle invitation to move through the room and discover ever-new nuances revealed by the shifting perspectives and lighting conditions. And this creates a friction that allows the various actors in the exhibition space to communicate with one another.

Oil paint takes relatively long to dry. The painter forgoes mixing her colours, instead using the paint straight from the tube. This way of working requires patience. For Brörmann, making art is not something that takes place outside everyday life, but as part of it. "Art comes from existential tension."³ Such temporality is perhaps necessary for the layers of meaning that characterise these images to accrue. Their pluralistic nature means they need time to be appreciated fully. Not because they are in anyway detached or standoffish. Quite the opposite: "Art

¹ Email from the artist, February 2021

² Phone conversation with the artist, March 2022

³ Email from the artist, February 2021

is something that is made for everyone; it's not some elitist thing." Brörmann sees her canvases as a democratic medium through which to reach as many people as possible.

The traces of colour on the canvas-covered outer edges of the stretcher frames point to the painting's beginnings. Small cracks tell of its drying. "I want the process to leave traces," Brörmann says. Like a surface protocol, each painting records every application and removal of paint, the tearing off of layers of colour and the movements of sandpaper. Yet all of this follows a formal methodology determined by the artist.

Brörmann talks about her play with form and colour as a way to "hold onto the energy in the paintings". This is not about alchemy or some other mystical pursuit but rather a "generosity towards the development". In other words, the way particular painting processes are structured can also mean that they sometimes simply accompany the emergence of a painting, providing space for certain developments and thus consciously "allowing something to happen". Then comes the moment when the painting suddenly works "as a whole" and in its details. Only then is the work complete.⁴

Patience, a love of experimentation and a particular sensitivity towards the materiality of the paintings feed into the painting process. Brörmann describes painting as a "negotiation between myself and the painting",⁵ a form of open dialogue with the canvas. "The paintings are my counterparts." It is in allowing for improvisation, for surprises to happen, for the unexpected to arise that makes her art alive. Which in turn gives rise to a political spark. This can be described as the recognition of the possibility of shifting from the tracks of routine thinking and acting onto unknown tracks, in order to affect some sort of change, small or large.

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⁴ Email from the artist, February 2021

⁵ Clara Brörmann cited here by Wilhelm Werthern in: *Le Monde diplomatique* 13.10.2016