

C. Morgenstern

*“There once was a picket fence,  
with in-between space, to look through.”*

The new, magnificent paintings by Heike Neumeister open up large and harmonious spaces to engage the observer and at the same time to invite to dream and stay. The essentially very bright and naturally colored acrylic paint is applied onto the canvas in glazed layers, with gestures and rich of nuances. The membrane-like painting surface is silky and warm.

The sovereign and subtle brush language rarely pushes itself into the foreground – as perhaps nearby the periphery – but often holds itself completely back in favor of the suggestive emptiness in the center of the paintings flooded by light. The eyes glide almost without resistance over the surface, but get caught again and again by the few (seemingly placed at random) fix points. Awareness about the importance of those small islands which often stand in strong contrast to the background, arises only after some time to understand Neumeister’s work. When looking closer these stumbling blocks turn out to be true foreign bodies, small pieces of paper or fabric, which are integrated to the art as collages or they sit sharply defined upon the paint.

As the observer I am now close to the painting with my nose, curiously trying to decipher the information of those foreign bodies: material, texture. Are there other references pointing to more outside realities of the painting?

Besides her work in the studio, the marine biologist works as a researcher at the City University of New York. There might be many obvious differences between scientific research and the work of an artist. However, a human explores in science as well as in the arts in a way to advance from the known to the unknown, from the conscious to the unconscious. Neumeister’s paintings visualize this impressively: the eyes get lost in the wake of the color, dive into the unknown but return again and again to the small anchors of reality, to the peripheral islands of certainty. The eyes need those pieces of paper to step again into the fog, just as a dancer who uses the contact with the ground to begin a new airy jump.

The seducingly painted in-between spaces which distinguish Heike Neumeister's paintings of the last 5 years – interpreted as air or as water – are gentle and at the same time show a powerful internal motion.

*“An architect who saw this stood there suddenly one evening - and took out the in-between space and built with it a big house.”*

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Arnold Helbling New York, August 17, 2014