

Landscapes are the subject of the new works by Annette Kisling. Although the individual black and white photographs seem relatively unspectacular, once seen in conjunction, they are quickly revealed as intriguing. Their appeal lies in the peculiar constellation of realistic scenes of untouched nature and artificial creations. But as the artificial elements - systems of analogies, contrasts and order of perspective, show no sign of outward interference, they create a mysterious impression of self-generation. The effect as a whole somehow resembles the Swabian playground game of 'Hans guck um!' (on the lines of What's the time Mr Wolf?), where one person turns around suddenly at which moment those running towards him have to stop dead in their tracks.

The impression of a peculiarly motionless and self-generated order is made more complex by the grouping of motifs. Depending on the angle from which they are seen or the repetition of a structure in a different motif, the landscape seems to change entirely. The viewer is unable to explain how the natural and the artificial relate in these pictures. Is it the deliberate organisational touch of the artist, to go beyond the drawing of structural analogies to actually creating them? Or does the repetitive element prove the exact opposite: that nothing has been invented, but merely repeated? Alternatively, perhaps it is the eye of the beholder, reading analogous structures into the photographs? But how can we see what isn't there?

What is latently happening during these processes can be described as a complex interplay of different levels of interpretation: the ontological (selfimposed order as the reason of being in natural processes), the aesthetic (nature and image as analogous objects of consciousness) and the hermeneutical (the moment of reception is the decisive moment in the thought process). In spite of the stringency which characterises this interplay, the pictures unfold smoothly. This can be explained by the aporetic structure of the processes which are set in motion: they do not lead to an end. The indeterminate nature of Annette Kisling's work has yet another reason. Repeated viewing reveals that individual motifs are not only an example of a repeated structure, but simultaneously display traces of individual and almost contradictory changes. A movement on the surface of the water in the foreground, or a change from order to disorder in a clump of grass, all happen in one go between two glances. Such changes are perceived as «separate» because they defy inclusion in the self-generating process of nature. They may occur in the course of nature and they may imply disorder. However, the perception of such changes and the implied motionless process of self-generation are inextricably linked to one another for the simple reason that one cannot exist without the other. This is precisely the quality that lends these photographs their mysterious strength. Nature, as depicted here, really does change.

This leads naturally to a further observation. After their peculiar salience, Annette Kisling's motifs tend to withdraw into the ordinary again. But as this ordinariness stands in direct contrast to their previous salience, such impressions remain mere possibilities. It is as if, exhausted by her brilliance, nature withdraws from interfering eyes to disappear completely. As a final touch, Annette Kisling allows us to perceive this vanishing process. But perhaps this is the very essence of her work.

Thilo Billmeier on the occasion of the exhibition „natural poses“, Galerie Kamm, Berlin 2000