

Stefan Waibel - "Alpenwarriors"

Stefan Waibel's series "Alpenwarriors" (2004-2007) consists of partly overpainted photographs of cows and cattle in the mountains of Vorarlberg and Tyrol. The painter/graphic artist/photographer continues his artistic practice of abstract painting on a background where the emptiness of a tabula rasa-like canvas is replaced by a photograph. The artistic process manifests in the act of photographing and the subsequent overpainting. The photograph, the realistic background picture, is on the one hand hidden by the overpainting, on the other hand it gains emphasis. The overpainting is less an act of actionistic relinquishing that visualises emotional states like, for example, in Arnulf Rainer's works, but rather a subjective expression, breaking with the realism of photography and adding something to the selected and captured motif.

The lively colours, mostly primary colours, which Stefan Waibel uses for overpainting, are applied two-dimensionally, emphasising the portrait of the animal. Especially the eyes blaze with an intensity and forcefulness that seem to do justice to the "warriors" featured in the title. They exude a power - or almost fearsomeness - that stands in opposition to the geographical region and the immaculacy of the countryside, showing the contrast between salvation/homeland and threat, between nature and art.

Like in his sprayed abstract pictures also the "Alpenwarriors" series features the almost invisible dots which Stefan Waibel adds to his works as a final point. Similar to a signature, they serve as identification marks for recognition. In an almost mannered way they outline the presence of the completed subject.

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