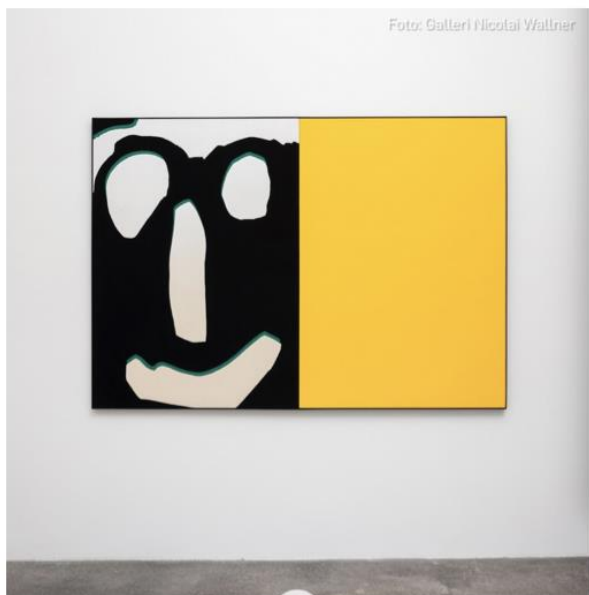


ART AND CULTURE SECTION 18. NOVEMBER 2020

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5 hearts: These brave paintings will make you smile

As a painter, Cornelia Baltes expresses herself so childishly simple yet at the same time in a direct manner, that she is reminiscent of a minimalist – 50 years after minimalism. One automatically comes to smile at the sight of her picture, and it is to be welcomed.



Humor in modern art is a rarity, especially if we are talking about art with a certain international wingspan. Right now, one can see such a rarity on display.

Cornelia Baltes' bright clear and strong colors are right for a children's room. And the simple and curved or slanted lines that the German artist uses in her paintings can well be confused with humor.

Even the titles of the pictures are reminiscent of cheerful words in a nursery rhyme.

For they consist of only three letters, such as 'Con', 'Noy', 'Soy', 'Nic', 'Yee', 'Yeb' and 'Loy'. Do these little words mean anything at all? It's not something you can look up in the dictionary and find an easy explanation for.

If we insist on talking about humor, however, the humorous effect is hardly intentional on the part of the artist. It is merely a consequence of the striking and disarmed simplicity with which she dishes up her imagery as well as her titles. What you see is what you get. But the fact that you get nothing but the little that you see ignites a suspicion of a hidden presence of something



Cornelia Baltes: Tit for Tat. Galleri Nicolai Wallner. Glentevej 47-49, København. Til 19. dec.

Is it conceivable that these images are a kind of surfaces, but with a hidden depth, and that they hide on visual codes that the eye cannot capture? Is there a system in the way Cornelia Baltes applies the colors from the color circles? And is it with well-advised mind that she somewhere lets the complementary colors be neighbors and thus challenges the viewer's sensory apparatus?

Recognizable shapes appear in her works, such as a face, a leg, a triangle or a letter. But still, one would hardly describe the images as typically figurative. On the other hand, they are not abstract either. For the colored forms of the image touch a kind of sign language. The question is simply what the signs allude to.

An extra wall

It can also seem a bit confusing if even a half-sized picture like 'Con' does not stop at the actual frame, which the picture otherwise always does, but continues out on the wall.

So should you decide to acquire this work for your home, space must also be set aside for an extra wall. Thus, more than hinting that a painting is not always just a delimited object and that it cannot necessarily just be moved to a completely different location.

The wall can also be an integral part of an image hanging on it.

In another image such as 'Soy' shows that Cornelia Baltes not only uses a brush and paint as work tools, but also scissors. For her untraditional method also opens the possibility that a shape can be cut, or cut out of her painting, so that it suddenly becomes a painted collage.

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Her idiom is so clear that you think you must have overlooked something

According to Artfact, Cornelia Baltes ranks among the 1,000 most important artists in Germany. That itself is not very impressive. It is perhaps also not impressive that the 42-year-old artist has had exhibitions in England and Switzerland - and now in Denmark, for the second time.



'Con'. Yes, common for all the titles of Cornelia Baltes' paintings: very short. When the price of this picture is as high as DKK 342,000, it is because the wall is part of the work.

But her pictures are directly impressive. In 2020 - all pictures are from this year - it requires some courage to paint paintings for a wall. For neither the medium nor the technique can be considered avant-garde.

It also requires a special courage if one, half a hundred years after the end of minimalism, wants to create a pictorial expression that appears as minimal, simple and childishly manageable as her work does.

The title of the exhibition, 'Tit for Tat', is about retaliation, about giving someone a spoonful of his or her own medicine. What Cornelia Baltes will retaliate or avenge is unclear. But her idiom, on the other hand, is so clear that you think you must have overlooked something.

If you're going to smile at all this clarity, it does not have to be for the sake of the pictures alone. Maybe you just need it at a time when too much is very serious without being particularly clear.