



MYRIAM THYES – PRETTY SMART

SMART TUNNEL

Where should one begin (if one is caught up in a perpetual cycle, a sequence of images that is at least infinite to think about)? And how? The best way, of course, is a sober inventory:

Smart Tunnel is a sequence of ten photographs or more precisely photomontages in black and white. Which is already a more precise description of its production process, not so much a material indication of the finished art product; for nowadays even the mounting of photos in and on top of each other is usually done digitally, i.e. neither with elaborate procedures in darkroom and laboratory, nor with collage-like tinkering with already existing photos with scissors and glue. This means that the pictorial result is of a previously unknown uniformity, a single smooth photographic surface, which, quite state of the art, receives additional value and a portion of extra shine through the surface sealing with an acrylic glass plate, behind which the photographic paper is glued directly.

This is by no means a superfluous statement; not only because photographs can also look quite different, but because this aesthetic of the surface combines with the theme of these pictures in an almost congenial way: In each of these 10 photographs, a pair of hands can be seen: While one is holding a smartphone, the other is touching the surface of the phone screen, which shows an image of another pair of hands holding and touching a smartphone, on the screen of which, in turn, another hand-held mobile phone is recognisable.... and so on and so forth.

The constructive pictorial tilts and tilted perspectives that result can sometimes create a horizontal spinning motion, a kind of visual whirlpool, even more often they form highly improbable yet believably suggestive spatial nests of plunging lines – and we tumble after them, like Alice in her hunt for the white

rabbit. This is repeated on every single tableau, with variations depending on whether the user is operating their smartphone one-handed or two-handed.

In addition to hands and fingers, one also sees pieces of clothing and jewellery, can recognise the age and gender of the people, if not, then at least guess at it. This richness of variety does not allow monotony to arise and, above all, it gives us the impression of a naturalism that this series of pictures does not possess at all: What is not noticeable at first is the reduction of the motifs on the respective screens: The artist has eliminated all operating elements and left only the screen, which of course does not correspond to the usual view of a smartphone display, but not only provides the photo with concentration on the essentials, but also literally draws us inwards as viewers, as a pull into the infinity of an optical tunnel, such as is otherwise only created by mirrors facing each other.

On the level of content, this is also a reflection of the user behaviour of us digital slaves, who stare at our portable mini-computers day in, day out, ostensibly to communicate with others or to learn something about the world, but who are ultimately trapped in a labyrinth in which we constantly reflect only ourselves.

And how can we ever stop doing that?

Stephan Trescher, 2023

stephan.trescherpost.de

thyes.com