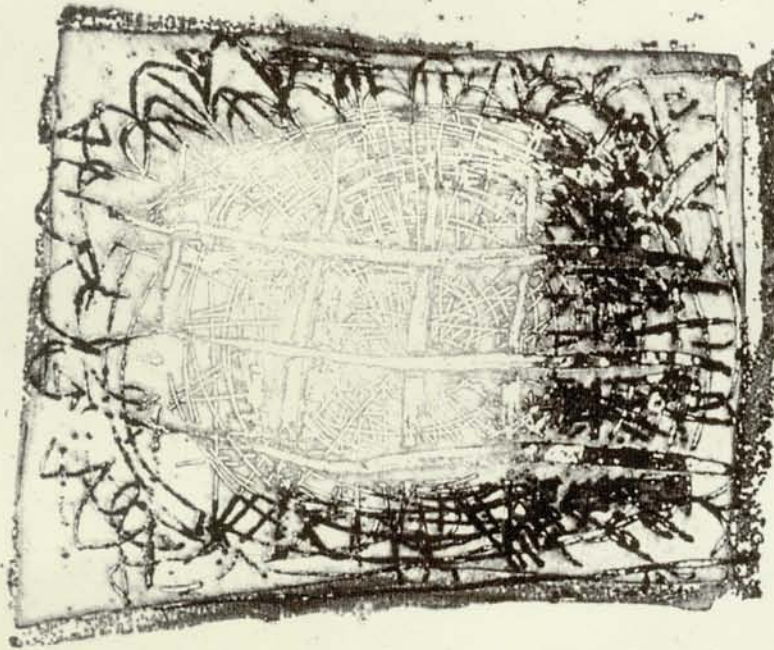


Symbols of enigmatic life

Karl Heinz Ritschel



Drago Druškovič certainly has a rich inner life. At first glance you may easily run the risk to designate him an ignorant, a dreamer far from any reality.

But as soon as you discuss with him you will realise that this label doesn't quite fit. On the contrary: this man is deeply connector to the world, is aware about all that goes wrong nowadays, how earth and man are exploited, how they are helplessly facing the modern crusades to create a supposed better civilization.

As an artist he is confronting this paradigm.

In this respect Drago Druškovič originally envisaged profession comes to the fore, since he once studied psychology in order to understand himself and other people better.

These studies led him to the profession of drawing and painting, because they give the opportunity to connect to things and situations, that transcend our hectic modern-times.

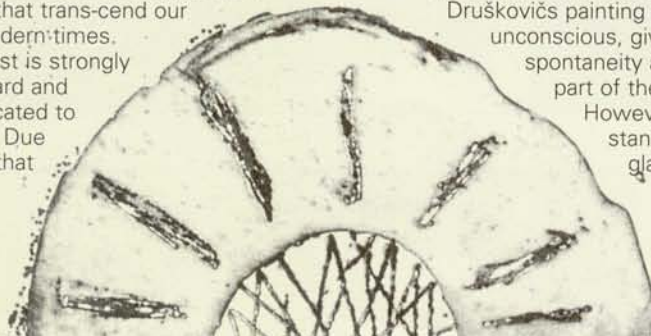
Yet this artist is strongly turned inward and highly dedicated to meditation. Due to the fact that

the task of the artist consists in expressing whatever moves him inside and to give it to the other, he made whole series of paintings and colour etchings about his results from meditation as well as its further possibilities. And when Druškovič thinks, that beyond the visible, sensorially perceptible world there is another invisible reality with countless worlds, that transcend our level of intellectual understanding, he also wants to show, that precisely this can be used as an opportunity for art to express these extraordinary dimensions.

Drago Druškovič's works are assembling archetypes, that are primordial unconscious shapes, symbols of enigmatic life, holy signs of primitive races, the totems of the Indians and more the like. We often encounter the sign of the cross and the circle: the circle as the symbol of file and the cross as that for the centre.

Druškovič's painting comes very much out of the unconscious, gives ample room to spontaneity and might be classified as part of the informel- movement.

However this judgement only stands firm as long as we glance rather schematically,



body of work because his originally high degree of abstraction ever there and then also leads towards a more illustrative form.

The artist experimented with all kinds of techniques: oilpainting, colour etching, objects and even tapestries woven on his design. His colors are peculiar too, because they are made out of all sorts of raw-materials, however they are by and large mainly vegetal pigments - a naturally favourite material for this life embracing artist. If one analyzes his work all the way since 1974, it becomes clear, that his working method has repeatedly undergone changes from sputtering and narrative contents and scribble-drawings, that almost looks like childrens work - here the psychologist Druškovič underlines how much we can learn from the spontaneous drawings of children towards more archaically seeming paintings, that he executes with crayons and brushes.

His colouring is undergoing change as well, at times having been very decent, you might even say mysteriously obscure, now is filled with a profound intensity of colour, that he uses with fully conscious intention. Nevertheless his colours never are screaming, and hold their temper in all their brightness, they are elegant and not obtrusive.

And inspite of all of these characteristics his works are fascinating in the strong unity of content and message, colouring and compelling use of symbolic language. Here it is interesting to take a closer look to some of his latest color etchings: „Monstranz“ is somewhat icon-like work, in the centre we see a man-like figure that in front of a bright blue painted background is surrounded by a kind of red and orange halo. The whole looks like a translucent cell with an archaic human in its nucleus, and this humanlike being is human in a transcendent way: as a symbol for life itself.

On the etching with the title „Stupa“ we encounter a completely different situation. This drawing is compositionally based on an architectural inspiration - the Stupa, an important ritual building in buddism, towering above an invariably circular ground plan. This architectural reference holds true for a whole series of etchings, in which the particular designs of sacred buildings have been transformed and incorporated.

But yet another strong source of inspiration can be seen in the artists intense studies of the shamanic worldview and the indian totems. According to the creative intention of the artist those forces that we have lost in our civilization should be reconnected to our consciousness on a higher level.

Drago Druškovič holds it of utmost importance that man again reestablishes a link to nature, to animals and plants on the one hand and to that invisible, spiritual world on the other hand.

This holds true for like „Tahtanka“, „Kachina“, „Totem with Feathers“ and „The Man of the Flower“, that all belong to this theme.

In the Sioux language Tahtanka means the buffa-

lo. The buffalo is - or rather was not only the king of the prairie, but represented also the cosmos, the whole world. The etching now shows us this buffalo transformed into a totem, a kind of noble blazon, with its bright eye directly piercing towards the observer, irrevocably claiming an answer.

The Kachinas of the Hopi Indians are spiritual beings, powers that for example make the weather, but can represent plant-beings or animals as well.

„The Man of the Flower“ is a charming piece in which a circle, appearing as the symbol for unity is richly decorated by the feathers of the sunbird, that itself stands for the highest being.

The etching „Totem with Feathers“ finally shows us a man, who seems to wear some kind of mask surrounded by an ornament of ceremonial feathers. This etching is particularly suited to draw a connection to African sculpture, which influence on modern art as a whole was the subject of detailed studies in recent years.

As we learn more about sculpture and painting of those tribes, we shall have to get increasingly conscious about the fact, that in the so called countries of the third and fourth world long ago existed great skill of arts and therefore what systems of thoughts must have been flowering there.

That too is an important intention of the painter Drago Druškovič, who as we told before, shows from a psychologically trained viewpoint the forces inherent to the ancient races, who created signs of enigmatic power. Signs that now exert on us, who have lost our closeness to nature a very special incentive, or one might even say mystical obsession.

Drago Druškovič has been born in Klagenfurt and has slovenian origins. He spent his childhood and youth in Lessach im Rosental (Valley of the roses). Later on he studied psychology in Graz and Salzburg.

Since he grew up in a region with a marked bilingual problem, the young artist might during his childhood and youth thus have evolved his sensitivity and wish to connect people, to give them opportunity for communication. This task without any doubt has been met with success in his meditation-pictures with his original graphical language by which he consciously wants to create signs, that eventually point to the basical structure of the earth and her human inhabitants. Two years ago, I wrote for the first time about the art of this painter, etcher and drawer the following lines: A way into the manifold spirals of life, a walk from the makro - towards the micro-cosmos of our world. I believe, these lines are still holding true - but the new language of shapes and the accented use of colour of the newer works give us prove that the artist has meanwhile progressed a great deal of distance on the way of artistic fulfillment.