

# The artist Alexander Ströck

Drawing, Printmaking, Painting

**Alexander Ströck**, born in Augsburg (D) in 1968, studied communication design at the Augsburg University of Applied Sciences with a focus on drawing and was a member of the Professional Association of Visual Artists of Swabia for two decades. He has been teaching analytical drawing at the private university NDU for eight years and works in publishing and for book productions. After several exhibitions in Germany and a solo exhibition in Vienna in 1995, he will present his works for the first time in Reichenau an der Rax in 2023.

The current works include numerous new creations as well as remixes of his works from the 1990s, which are being given a new interpretation three decades later.

## Rhythm and broken idyll

Alexander Ströck works at the interface of figuration and abstraction. In his etchings and oil paintings, organic forms and shapes meet hard architectural structures. Painterly gesture moves with him like the melody and rhythm of a piece of music - flowing, oscillating, with fermatas and syncopations.

In his works Ströck plays with the tension between creative exuberance and restraint. Beings develop from a stroke that can just be discerned from nervous coils. Then again it is complex surfaces, spatial structures and sharp strokes that give the picture its direction. Figurative appearances are woven into variable, condensing spaces.

A view opens up of idylls of which one is not a part. Urban scenes and landscapes, oscillating between surreal emptiness and unseen intensification, which only become concrete through the viewer. Characters who are entirely to themselves, undisturbed by the voyeuristic view from outside. Figures, alone together, seeking company. The contrast of isolation and group, which becomes an ensemble of limbs and asserts itself as its own organic entity. Encounters of reservedly acting figures in spaces that (as in a dream) refuse to accept everyday logic.

(Ströck) "I observe how people move in the world they have filled with artificial spaces and objects. In the process, I experience densely packed gatherings of people as a structure, individual contrasting figures in varying degrees of tension. On the one hand they seek the group out of a longing for security, on the other hand they are crushed in it, lose their individual physiognomy and become a stylised drawn prototype."

The scenes often seem disturbing in their compositional intensification. Only on second viewing do the humour and melancholy inherent in the whole reveal themselves. The first impression is undermined and backed up with meanings in a not always tangible direction. And yes, sometimes the uncanny lurks behind. Sensitive and extraordinary in their graphic expression, they are snapshots of vulnerable beings in distress.

Inspired by old masters or just by scenes quickly observed out of the corner of the eye, Ströck creates a pictorial world that, in all its hermeticism, demands to be looked at closely. The small-format prints with their easily overlooked graphic condensations of the layers of lines reveal their filigree charm especially at close range. The paintings, on the other hand, allow the kind of reception experience Ströck is striving for that is only possible in the original painting. The perception of the composition from a distance changes when approaching the painting. The descriptive content of the picture recedes into the background, the means of surface design come into focus: the surface of the picture and the material itself speak directly to the viewer with their materiality and rhythmic trace of movement. Colour and painterly-rhythmic gesture assert their aesthetic-abstract life of their own apart from the purely narrative and descriptive function in the picture.

Pictorial plan and random stroke, form and association characterise Ströck's artistic conflict, but also drive the drawing forward and keep the painterly process in motion.