

GALERIE SANDRA BÜRCEL

Nicolai Crestianinov
Metaphysik 2712018

Opening Reception, January 27, 7 p.m.
Exhibition January 30 - March 17 2018

Moon No 2, Individual No 6, Signal No 1, Element No 1. stand in the firmament. They are separate and among many, just as we turn to one moon and ∞ many stars.

From the abstract pictures in agile streaks, spots, small squares and other geometrical shapes of almost primary colors leaks a rare temperance, which, in a sense, suggests the development of a set of rules and of a palette. Nevertheless, the paintings don't have a strict appearance. They preserve a light, speculative nature and a considerate confidence in the means of painting. Unlike in figurative drawing, lines have „no meaning“, and the defeat of the production of meaning blows gentle air into the paintings. Nicolai Crestianinov calls them "chaotic", despite their many ornamental repetitions, to emphasize their release from visibly different stages. The equilibrated making of several, never only one, canvases corresponds to the writing of a score. If you add something, there will be shifts altogether, a new sound pattern, as in music or architecture. Other than that, the artist's affirmation that everybody should be able to recognize whatever he wanted to, is as undemanding as confident. His formulation of abstraction is closer to the icon (eikón for effigy) – whereby Man is a resident only – than to an all encompassing fertile, gestural vision.

Although supposedly (computer-)generated graphical elements can be found in the paintings, with even a certain resemblance to punch cards, the reproach of “New Age”, that Human Potential Movement from Palo Alto which hasn't helped provide the mind with the strengthening originally striven for but on the contrary has led to monolithic structures of political power, fails to recognize the monastic origin of the paintings and underestimates the social dimension of the draft. Meanwhile, Chisinau, the capital of Moldova, has a remarkable legacy of Soviet Modernism architecture, from the time of the first manned orbit travels, when people still took the trouble to visualize structural relations. When Nicolai Crestianinov is reaching for the stars, he might also recall that heritage. (Sometimes, like in *Hotel Cosmos*, 2015, it's more real than you'd suppose.)

Early works, during or shortly after the studies, seem to act as the foundation upon which the development into extensively abstract pictures (e.g. *Space*, 2015, 250 x 125 cm) has taken place. Often, figurative references are ascetically reduced to one object. The *death's heads* and skeletons (2011-2013) are already architectures of vibrant struts and sights into deep spaces. And some colorful paintings with calligraphic parts, similar to 15th century liturgical Books of Hours (as *Bube* (Jack), 2011, 320 x 110 cm; a young horse rider with a club, against a sky dotted with jellyfishes), point to the brotherhood of darkness and cheerfulness.