

Abridgement from "Somewhere déjà in Ponutschland" by Julia Wirxel

Andrea Weber is interested in questions of space and the interrelation between two- and three-dimensionality. The quest for space can at once imply an escape from it. The openness of spatial design and the rejection of determination lead to an atmosphere of spacelessness and timelessness that is particularly distinctive of the contemporaneity of the oeuvre.

The artist loves to play with multiple levels, with the levels of concrete media, but also with those of content and form. She takes the play within the play, a feature of European as much as Japanese theater, to its logical extreme, interweaving the different levels of reality, illusion, and fiction: the medium inside the medium inside the medium. The drawing and the collage in a book, as a book, that becomes a photograph and is mounted on the wall.

The point of departure in Andrea Weber's work is often her own person; she starts with herself, examining her feelings and her personal situation. She chooses herself as an object, even quite literally, producing photographic self-portraits, but also safeguarding her status as a subject and objectivating this status in turn, rendering things comprehensible. This turns her into a stand-in for the beholder. As she freely admits, she did not have a studio for a while, modifying her way of working accordingly. This is not to imply a rigorous structural critique, but it does reveal constellations that are usually kept secret—an artist is supposed to have a studio. It also debunks another myth: that of the conditions under which art is produced. For of course the production of art ought not to be considered "free" and independent of external factors, as some continue to suggest.

In 2007, for instance, Andrea Weber begins a work entitled *Factory for Mental Space Development*; it remains incomplete. She chooses the form of a sketchbook, working on one open page at a time. Working in watercolor and ink, she gradually creates spatial illusions in the two-dimensional plane, drawings or works that integrate the element of photography or found newsmagazine material, another way of involving the real space in the drawings, resulting in collages. The artist creates multiple levels, fuses multiple spatial levels. Andrea Weber alters this impression by reproducing her work using photographs and creating a new, smoothed-out level. The result is a carefully administered dose of confusion when the beholder has not yet discovered the book on exhibition. She nests the two-dimensional space in illusionistic fashion, playing her game with the beholder in the process of translation. Nor does she hide the transformation, openly revealing her different media, inviting the beholder to explore her methods.

Andrea Weber's drawings are ephemeral and fragmentary, but also very focused, and demonstrate a wide aesthetic range. She uses graphical as well as photographic elements sparingly. The enigmatic character of some of the objects depicted, such as the fluffy cloud stool equipped with drawn wings, becomes part of her hermetic realm. Drawing renders Andrea Weber receptive to remembered events or (dream) spaces that take on a stage-like character. Sketches emerge that might be ideas for stage designs, which will soon be implemented for the stage of a theater in actual or illusionistic three dimensions or in an art installation. The frequently recurring lines that serve to mark a space move to a corner of the room by means of black tape, suggesting considerations on this issue.

Andrea Weber examines dream and space, recollections, a remainder, a feeling, an aftertaste.

Yume no Ato, which was translated as *What remained of the dream*, was the title of an exhibition; the words came from a haiku by Matsuo Basho (17th century). The last trace of what remained of the dream is tied in the haiku to recollections of specific places; in Andrea Weber, it is last night's dream, of which a trace remains she realizes the next day in her spiritual-visual spaces. One drawing shows a rounded polygonal cutout, the face of a sleeping woman in a white room. The oversized face, relaxed and vulnerable, rests in a sort of primeval space, indicated, as is often the case, by no more than three lines. Yet if we imagine the moment of waking up, or how this face walks or trundles away, we are struck by the impression of something monstrous. What sort of creature is this? A figment of the oneiric imagination, or an antagonist from the film *Big Man Japan* (JAP 2007, Hitoshi Matsumoto) who must be fought? Andrea Weber's photographs show mountains; one of them spits out a golden gouache cloud, so it might be a volcano. It also looks like pudding served with too much brown sugar, and recalls another mountain that must be distantly seen in dreams and drawn and shaped again and again: the Devil's Tower from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (USA 1977, Steven Spielberg). In addition to the obvious, then, we can find here, too, something of the Science-Fiction or Surrealist sort.