

## Condensates

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If the self-dissolving image can be seen as a celebration of entropy, in his "Condensates" series Norbert Pümpel takes a further step towards relinquishing control over his own materials and at the same time applying modern physical models of the state of the world. It is based on the subject of the Bose-Einstein condensate, i.e. unorthodox behavioral patterns displayed by matter at ultracold temperatures. It is in this range that macroscopic quantum phenomena first become apparent and can be described as wave functions; a discontinuous view of the world is replaced by a continuum of superfluid matter, which is perceived as an oscillation without any defined location. Norbert Pümpel's works describe states of probability, blurring all spatial structures in new aggregate states and creating a liquid, fleeting, wave-dynamic image of the world. With regard to the theoretical aesthetics behind this group of works, the artist says: "The difference as reflected in my works between the view dominant in quantum mechanics in the 1970s and 80s and today's approach is most clearly reflected in the fact that the early state of my knowledge reflected a continuous world of quantized matter and/or energy, a world of structures comprised of discrete packets of elementary particles, photons, energy packets."

Norbert Pümpel, who has made visual implementation of the latest theories of physical knowledge (complete with their philosophical presuppositions and ethical consequences) since the beginning of his artistic career in the 1970s, derives new approaches to theory-of-knowledge creativity from the latest approaches to the description of the state of matter. In his "Condensates", it is oils interacting with "various solutions and substances", to use his almost alchemistic formulation for the materials he applies to the canvas, through which his current view of the world emerges out of a nebulous haze. The individual works develop in serial experimental designs, in which the atelier becomes a laboratory and the artist the experimenter.

In this play of liquids, the artistic subject is superfluous. With the voluntary reduction of his options, the artist steps back behind a self-organizing organism, which itself takes charge of the final aesthetic decisions. As the initiator – not the consummator – of the empowered work, his function is merely to launch a process which, from that moment onwards, develops according to its own laws. The artist's role is reduced to that of a catalyst for a development whose process can only be influenced at the originating moment and which generates a result which will surprise him in its unpredictability. He withdraws to the demiurgic role of an initial stimulator and subsequently an observer of his deed – and so becomes his own recipient.

That lends all the more weight to the original moment: as an irreversible initial decision or, for more pathos, as the moment of creation.

The artist lets art unfold. Something takes its course. This finding from Samuel Beckett's "Endgame" was chosen by Norbert Pümpel years ago as the title of an exhibition – art in a process of change in a world in a process of change, with developing images for a developing image of the world.

Harald Kimpel, Man blickt nicht zweimal in dasselbe Werk from:  
art@science, Drei Positionen der Wissenschaftsästhetik  
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