



Jens Lorenzen

Q: What is your inspiration?

A: For me, the question is not how to get inspired. The problem I'm faced with is how to be selective with all of the inspiration that is attacking me.

Q: What artists or movements do you see your work as being related to?

A: Pop Art influenced me a lot, maybe because of my exchange year in Cleveland, OH in 1977-1978. To me, American Pop Art is not just an artist's movement; it belongs to a very intense experience in my life. Another big impact on my work comes from Italian Renaissance fresco painting. I have travelled to Tuscany, Umbria and so forth many times to visit all the old churches and see these brilliant wall paintings. To me, the surface of these works was very important, along with the damage that time has caused, parts that are missing, layers of paint that have withered away to reveal the wall beneath. Rotella, Hains, Village and Vostell with their decollage technique have also influenced my work. In these, I find Pop themes and a worn down surface in one work.

Q: Do you have any upcoming projects?

A: I am participating in an important museum show in Flensburg, which celebrates the return of the "Idstedt Lion" monument to its original place, which is supposed to intensify the friendship between the Danish and German people. The show will then move to Sonderburg, Denmark.

Q: Could you please describe your technique and process?

A: Looking for motifs is an important part of my work. Sometimes I find them by chance, sometimes I do a lot of research. Once I find a motif, I take a picture of it with my analog camera. I store the slides in Leitz folders in my studio. Using a slide projector, I throw the motif onto the canvas and sketch the outline. The motifs and their position on the canvas change many times. Slowly, the canvas and the painting gain density. When everything looks good, the painting of the details begins.

Q: Do you have any formal training?

A: I studied art at The Art University Braunschweig. My professor was Hermann Albert.



Q: Who are your favorite artists?

A: Most of the artists I admire belong to the three movements I already mentioned: Pop Art, the Italian Renaissance and decollage. Furthermore, I really value Pierre Paolo Pasolini and Vladimir Majakowski. As far as contemporary artists, I favor Peter Anton.

Q: Are there any underlying themes that you purposely integrate throughout your work? Do individual paintings have specific meanings ?

A: The only theme that is underlying in my work is The Wall itself. The Wall is the surface on which I unfold my assumptions. These don't follow any logical system and that is why there really isn't any meaning that viewers should be able to grasp. Nevertheless, each of my assumptions inevitably leads to the next - there's a lot of reason to it. But in terms of content, nothing is necessary.

Q: How did you start using historical and pop cultural references?

A: I guess I picked it up from TV, magazines and newspapers. They always do it - they show history and pop, news and ads, valuable and profane things, high and low side by side.

Q: How did you develop the idea of the Wall?

A: The fact that Germany was separated in half affected me a lot. My parents cultivated a close friendship with a family from East Germany and we visited them many times. We could get in, but they couldn't get out. I had some dramatic experiences crossing the border. A border I never accepted.

Shortly after the reunion, I moved to East Berlin, It was very difficult to survive there, but it was adventurous. I started painting GDR and Russian icons like "Caviar" and "Kasbek." My "Russian Series" was shown in a solo show at the German-Russian Museum in Berlin. Having this opportunity was a big personal success for me.

In 2007, I started working on a big painting and had the division of Germany in mind. I soon realized that all of the assumptions and motifs that came to mind when thinking about the Cold War era wouldn't fit on one canvas. So I added another canvas, but the motifs still overspread it. A third canvas didn't solve the problem either. When I started working on the fourth painting in a row, the idea of the Wall was born.



Q: Could you explain the use of newspapers in your work?

A: Maybe it's because it makes my paintings look more serious. The use of newspapers underlines my investigative attempt. And isn't the slogan of the New York Times "Looking for the story behind the story?" That's pretty close to what I am doing.