



Alain Mieg Beyond Horizons

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If one rushes past the paintings of Alain Mieg, works like *Africa*, *Misty Hill*, or *Chile*, one could get the impression that the subjects of the paintings are specific horizons in specific locales. But Mieg is not a plein air painter of scenes. His paintings, carefully construct-ed with multiple translucent layers of acrylic paint, are meditations, moreover, meditations on what lies just beyond all possible horizons.

"All the situations and landscapes I dream. The dreams are wishes to be different places I have been, or would like to be. Getting up in the morning, I feel exactly the moment, the colors.

I smell the sky, the wind and feel the sun. I hear the music that will accompany me on this trip. And then I start my voyage to another world -- places quiet, sources of my energy."

Mieg describes the process of creating his paintings as taking place in a meditative state often induced by a dream. He will dream, perhaps of no particular place or perhaps of someplace specific like the deserts of North America or the open sea. After having fully escaped to the landscapes of his dream he will awaken -- and yet still, in spirit, be away. These are the circumstances under which Mieg paints. Avoiding any possible distraction or interruption to his trans-portive state he goes directly to his studio after waking and, impor-tantly, before painting chooses specific music to match his mood. The

particular music, be it something by Pat Metheny or a classical piece like Satie, is played repeatedly as Mieg paints for five or six hours in a session.

Mieg's sensitivity to color and careful modulation of hue give, in large part, his paintings their power. A work like *Distance* with a broad sand colored expanse in the foreground, a molted baby blue with tans, lightly clouded sky above and the impression of shimmering heat far off offers exactly the impression of a distant desert horizon. And with largely the same composition of horizontal bands of color the work *Mystic* -- with a dramatically different palette -- has an entirely different atmosphere. Where as *Distance* is bright and expansive the black blues and greys with rust accents of *Mystic*, colors that seem to flow towards a dark nearly black band at the painting's center, suggest the horizon or perhaps something ominous is near at hand.

"It all started with landscapes. In younger years I was very influ-enced by the impressionists -- Cézanne, Monet, Bonnard. In the warm tones, the impressions hiding many details, the concentrations on colours, I found places where I could go, where I could find com-fort and security. Someplace out of the real world which too often is too strong for comfort."

Mieg creates then a landscape from meditation for meditation - a mindscape. In the painting *Himmel-Meer (Sky and Sea)* A blue sky with warm accents is mirrored by a buff colored sea and at the hori-zon is an ephemeral greenish strip that could be an island or perhaps a mirage. In the work Mieg's layering technique is easily visible and the effects it produces include the illusion of sky and sea sharing a shimmering effervescent light. In the work *Sonnenkraft (strength of the sun)* the break between above and below the horizon is more dis-tinct. At first the painting seems divided equally into warm and cool hues. But as one studies the canvas the two major bands of color break down and become an interplay of secondary and tertiary bands of intermingled hues.

"The horizon is for me the energetic band that brings the sky, water and earth together. It's my goal to go behind these horizons. Trying to show things that, because we are too close to them, are not visible in nature."

The work *Horizon* is immediately something more than a horizon. In fact, the work veers toward complete abstraction. Running horizontally across the middle of the work are two bright bands, one yellow and one white, above the yellow spreads toward the viewer golden tinged atmospheric effects and below the white the atmos-

phere is cooler. The bold central bands hold the viewer focused as the play of light and amorphous forms of the painting offer an ever transforming space that as it unfolds in time can only exist in the mind.

Mieg's intentions, of course, are not for the viewer to become enamored in his facility as a painter. His goal is to relay directly to the viewer the mood (the dream state) that was the wellspring of the creative act itself.

The artist sets for himself the difficult task of capturing the media weary viewer. But in a world of rapid fire imagery Mieg offers the view-er a restorative experience that requires only his willingness to take time to abandon himself to the artifice of painting. The more the view-er lets a painting unfold over time the more that which was not visible becomes visible and the closer the viewer gets to understanding the original energy the artist tapped in the work's creation. Mieg empha-sizes that as his process matures even the structures of his approach, the contemplations of physical horizon lines, have begun to fall away. Painting and viewing become acts of enlightenment where all subjects become a white light of the metaphysical beyond.

Alain Mieg (b. 1964) lives and works in Lenzburg, Switzerland.

Top:
Himmel-Meer
60 x 120 cm
acrylic on canvas, 2001

Bottom / Left:
Sonnenkraft
70 x 100 cm
acrylic on canvas, 2001

Bottom / Right:
Mystic
90 x 70 cm
acrylic on canvas, 2001