Adrian Sauer
A–Z
03/09 – 04/21/2012

The researcher in the space of calculated images

It was the structuralist linguistics that decided in the 20th century to dissect the phenomenon of language into its smallest elements, into meaningful and distinguishable units. Like this it would be more successful, according to the systematic opinion of the structuralists, to explore this very familiar instrument of our communication, used by everyone. Next to the researchers the poets emerged, who experimented with the raw material of language, its sound, and in their own way they created concrete poetry, by identifying the distinct aesthetic qualities of these smallest elements.

The photographer and artist Adrian Sauer does not address verbal language, yet with the new digital world of images he does devote himself to another ever more important field of our communication–and he does it in a way that can be compared to the different methods of linguistics.

While he did devote some of his works to the semantic and pragmatic dimension of the use of images–how are images used and read in a specific context–his main interest lies in the "morphology" of the digital image, its "theory of form": How is it assembled within its smallest parts? How does it work to transfer visible, physical reality into a saved, calculated image? What do the Raster of the new optical instruments provide?

The artistic work of Adrian Sauer as such poses questions about the limits of the *image* in a time in which camera images increasingly become hybrid constructs, between light measurement and mathematical recalculation. In a provocative way, some of his works at first resemble technical test pictures, and yet these questions are included into the language and tradition of *concrete* and *generative* photography. That tendency of an abstract art which, since the great Hungarian constructivist László Moholy-Nagy, has been trying to get rid of the slavish, reproductive quality of photography and to replace *reproduction* with autonomous *production* of images (as such his famous conceptual pair from the 1920s).

In his newest work *Schwarze Quadrate (Black Squares)* Adrian Sauer points out clearly the fact that today's digital cameras calculate–thus invent–a part of the image. The more precisely you align the structure of the motive with that of the instrument, the lower the identicalness of the emerging image. The limitation of the reproductive quality of the digital instruments reveals itself here, surprisingly, as the beginning of an "autonomous" image.

Another aspect of Adrian Sauer's work is the question of a contemporary form of "abstract genesis" of images. More critically put: What today replaces Jackson Pollock's "dripping" of the 1950s? Digital images are calculated images, and because of that free of chance. Sauer's large panel picture *gradient* illustrates the attempt to sort the digitally representable colors according to their light levels.

Modern images, which is what the works of Adrian Sauer suggest, obey a mathematical, purely theoretical space, a world not made up of concrete physical bodies, whose appearance analog images were at least still reflective of. This departure into immaterialness in turn is being reflected in Adrian Sauer's series *A–Z (Brockhaus)*. It consists of 38 photographs that show the cardboard slipcases of the Brockhaus encyclopedia, as made apparent by the carefully printed back cover. The supplementary volumes go up to the year 2000, but there will be no new edition of this print version. The cartons, captured from the back, are presumably empty. The white surface of the cases and the bright pictorial space in which they are contained, symbolize the fact that the knowledge production of the future will no longer require black ink, but rather will take place within the white spaces of computers.
(Florian Ebner, 2012)

KLEMM'S