

Thomas Ritter

Biography

Thomas Ritter was born in Hoxter, Germany in 1955.

Ritter's complex abstract paintings are inspired by his love of nature. He often spends time in the countryside, where the various landscapes and their variables of time, geography and light lend distinct impressions of color, shape, and mood. These impressions then become materialized through layered compositions. Grounds of acrylic and filler compound create a base on top of which oils are then added to educe lushness, blurred lines, and density. Amongst these abstractions, Ritter often includes outlines of figures to place man as center of nature.

During 1984 -1989 Ritter undertook a course of studies in free art under Professor Redeker at the Hanover College. He lectured on nude and figure drawing at the University of Hanover from 1989 –1997. He has exhibited widely throughout Europe. In Ritter's work, the numerous nuances in color, the blurring and painting over, and the working of color with a spatula are all displayed before our eyes without having the effect of looking constructed.

He lives and works in Hanover, Germany and Vastergodland, Sweden.

Exhibitions

- 1991 Frankfurt Book Fair, Frankfurt, Germany
- 1992 Art Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany
- 1993 Art Multiple Duesseldorf, Duesseldorf, Germany
- 1994 Estampa, Madrid, Spain
- 1994 Stockholm Art Fair, Stockholm, Sweden
- 1995 Art Cologne, Cologne, Germany
- 1995 Norrbottens Museum, Luila, Sweden
- 1995 Art Vienna, Vienna, Austria
- 1996 Art Frankfurt, Frankfurt, Germany
- 1997 Art Multiple Duesseldorf, Duesseldorf, Germany
- 1998 Art Vienna, Vienna, Austria
- 1998 Leinart Gent, Gent, Belgium
- 1999 Art and Antique Fair Gent, Gent, Belgium

1999	Art Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria
2000	Art Utrecht, Utrecht, The Netherlands
2000	Art Strassburg, Strassburg, Germany
2001	Art Cologne, Cologne, Germany

Landscape and People

Thomas Ritter often spends time in the countryside, as the retreat to nature gives him strength and challenges him to ponder. The impressions, colors, shapes and moods let him reflect upon his own feelings and how he expresses them in his paintings. The compositions of Ritter's paintings have many layers; with fast drying acrylic colors and filler compound, the artist builds a base, a framework on the canvas. Over and over again, by blurring and by painting over, these structures are changed. "I put great value on these preparations, before the actual layering of colors even begins", the artist explained. "I have to react quickly because acrylic colors dry fast. If I want to change something, I have to act immediately." These layers and structures create a base that gives the paintings a strong spatial effect. The canvas thus prepared will then be worked step by step with slow drying oil colors.

Now the artist can take his time in applying colors. The various layers are clearly visible. The numerous nuances in color, the blurring and painting over, the working of color with a spatula – all are displayed before our eyes without having the effect of looking "constructed". For example, an aggressive color like red blends into the painting's composition without overwhelming it. When one looks closely, the entire spectrum of forms and shapes can be seen and analyzed. Again and again, the abstract works created reveal surprising discoveries. The references to nature can be interred, yet a whole new image has been created.

Mondrian described the relationship between nature and abstraction as: "The more abstract nature is depicted, the more perceptible is the connection". This connection between nature and its transformation into a painting can be clearly felt in the works of Thomas Ritter. However, as if these abstract emotional connections were not sufficient, his paintings often include outlines of figures – sometimes well defined, sometimes blurred. For Ritter, man is at the center of nature. With the inclusion of these human figures, the artist softens the depiction of nature in purely abstract shapes. Thomas Ritter injects his own style without losing the connection to reality. A painter must understand his surroundings; artistic creation is always an immediate reaction and a direct response to one's surroundings. Ritter doesn't want to lose the contact to his models in nature and in his surroundings, that's why man appears again and again as an essential building block. In the works of Thomas Ritter there is a close connection between nature and its artistic transformation. His works are a testimony to his personal challenge, similar to what Max Beckmann demanded in a 1948 letter to a lady painter: "Again and again, each depiction of an impression of nature has to become an expression of your own joy or your own sorrow.

That's why the composition has to include the changes which then create art, the true abstraction."