

REALITY IS NO ART

Dr. Reinhold Misselbeck 1995

Curator, Museum Ludwig, Koln, Germany

One of the thoughts that is closely linked to art since it established itself as autonomous, is the one of reconciling art and reality, of combining art and life. Since Russian Constructivism, Bauhaus, Happening, Fluxus and via Pop Art, there have always been attempts to break through art's isolation in the ivory tower of the world of art and to re-obtain contact to daily life.

Greg Gummersall follows this direction with his works and defines it moreover as being the intersection between abstraction and representation. Beyond any doubt, his works have to be considered in keeping with Robert Rauschenberg's picture/object collages of elements of broken pieces of civilization. The mind, gesture and colorfield painting of the New York School have to be regarded as godfathers in this context.

The contradiction of these two arthistoric sources highlight the cultural performance of Gummersall's works. He reconciles what was considered contradictory during the 80s, he even makes it melt to a unity. The element of painting in his work is always the abstract one where flat areas of colors are arrayed in layers and partially covered/layered by color. The representational aspect can be found in another media; it makes use of photographic and printed copies that he projects from nowhere into the picture. These picture elements cover the painted ones, but are sometimes also framed or covered by them. Gregory Gummersall's pictures, paintings, collages and object assemblages form an entire unity with tensions, but still a homogeneous harmony. Besides popular quotes such as dollar bills, also numerous autobiographical contexts, writings and signs flow into it.

Art is reality; reality is no art, it can however be art. It can become art if it loses its utility value (e.g. with Duchamp); if its aesthetical being is called into

existence. C. Gregory Gummarsall makes this metamorphosis of the things by incorporating them into his painting. In his painting, objects and photos of things and human beings dominate besides reality and the cultural power of color and become unities. Obviously, C. Gregory Gummarsall exactly meets the nerve of time with his gouaches and oil paintings. Only in this way can the success be explained that Gregory Gummarsall is having with his works after quite a short period of time, especially with private collectors. His works reconcile in a convincing way the two main contradictory tendencies of our century – of abstraction and of representation.