

A Fruitful Darkness  
Sebastian Speckmann  
7–9 June 2019

The fine and detailed Linocuts by the Artist Sebastian Speckmann evolve scenic landscapes and motifs in front of the beholder's eye. The pictures seem strangely familiar, at the same time tense and mysterious. Continuing the long tradition of European printmaking, the linocuts of the Leipzig artist inspire both, with their technical elaboration and their narrative content. The motifs have their very own narrative potential, through hints or through - for the viewer not to be resolved situations - the images continue to work in the imagination of the beholder, involving him in the content of the respective motifs. So it is not by chance that the individual, highly atmospheric images have different readings for the individual viewer.

Speckmann deliberately does not dissolve these tensions; rather, he plays with experiences and memories of his audience. By "combining" several narrative strands into a single motif, empty spaces in the content - or the free combinability of the individual elements - create alternative narrative structures, similar to other examples of this narrative approach like the films of David Lynch as well as the paintings and printmaking of the artists of the Leipzig School.

The associative titles, which often refer to individual pictorial elements or open up spaces through the juxtaposition of images and a title that seems to have only a limited connection, have an amplifying effect in this play on content, beyond the stories shown in the picture.

The impressive technical elaboration complements this approach: Structures formed from thin lines and dot-grids form a set of architecture or landscape sections, populated by often silhouetted figures. Going into detail, Speckmann modulates spatiality and depth from fine color shades, yet still leaves many things open to the viewer; The works are created as classic prints, either as wood- or linocut. The bright image areas mark the processed areas of the printing plate. This is where Speckmann cuts away material, creating colorless, white spots on the printed paper. The color scale of the mostly monochrome printed sheets arises only from the density of these defects. The fine, gradual differences are created by hatching, by more or less dense patterns of lines and dots that break through the deep black ink with their white.

The title of the exhibition "A fruitful Darkness" refers to two points that characterize the work of the artist, who was born in Wolfen in 1982: on the one hand, it can be read as an allusion to the above-described narrative potential of the works. From memories, from unspecified situations, created in the subconscious of the viewer, the pictures draw their mysterious and atmospheric character. On the other hand, the title can be summed up as a reference to the technique used in Speckmann's work:

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The image of an unprinted printed plate would be just black, with his interventions, by cutting out and cutting away individual areas, he creates images from out of this "fruitful" darkness.