

# ULRICH ERBEN PITTURA - determinare lo sconfinato -

curated by Helmut Friedel  
September 29, 2017 - December 1, 2017

Painting always involves the interaction of colour and surface. The edges, the boundaries, every tangent of one surface with another, provide the outlines for vibrating zones of contested space - separations and mergings. These contours can stand out crystal clear and collide hard, rigidly with neighbouring colour fields, like a cut; but they can also, as is usually the case with Ulrich Erben, become an exciting, tension-filled optical game for the viewer. This is often the case in paintings in which two colour fields permeate each other in inverse gradations of brightness, overlap each other or waveringly touch. Only towards the final, outer edge of the graduated brightness of one field does the presence and relative effect of the other colour field become visible. The result is near bafflement, because the precise point at which the change from one colour field to the other takes place cannot be located, the viewer misses it every time. These shifts take the viewer by surprise most often when the interchange is between two fields of the same or similar colours. Then the viewer is looking, as it were, into a canvas on which an image is shown, an image in which, amid the glistening light of a snowy, misty landscape the contours of nature are suspended. In the images of Ulrich Erben, then, the viewer encounters a boundary between that which is still visible and that which is vanishing into boundless mystery. In its painterly capture of the intangible, his art of silence treads hitherto unseen territory.

Ulrich Erben was born in Düsseldorf (Germany) in 1940.

Between 1958 and 1963 he studied at Hamburg Academy of Art and later at those of Venice, Monaco and Berlin.

Ulrich Erben took part to some of the most important exhibitions dedicated to Analytical Painting, including: 'Perception Times', Casa della Cultura, Livorno, 1973; 'A possible future. New Painting', Palazzo dei Diamanti, Ferrara; 'Reflection about painting', Palazzo Comunale, Acireale; 'Geplante Malerei', Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster; Galleria del Milione, Milan, 1974-75; 'The colours of painting', Italian-Latin American Institute, Rome, 1976. In 1977 he was invited to Kassel for 'Documenta 6'. Interested as he was about the effects of light beyond the picture, he also worked on mural projects, such as the exhibitions at Museum Folkwang in Essen, Kunstverein in Cologne, Galleria Piltzer in Paris, and Five Ginza in Tokyo. In the last few decades he held several shows in venues such as Kunsthalle in Mannheim (1984) and Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen in Düsseldorf (1990). In 2003 Wiesbaden Museum dedicated him a monographic show. In 2010 he held an important solo exhibition at Galleria Studio G7 in Bologna. He also exhibited at Zappettini Foundation in the group shows 'Painting 70. Painting-painting and analytical abstraction' (Chiavari, 2004) and 'Matt surfaces of analytic painting' (Chiavari, 2009).

Lives and works between Düsseldorf and Bagnoregio.