

SELECTED WORKS FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION:

THOMAS KINKADE

3rd - 11th July 2009

A concept by Raphael Gygax

Opening: Thursday 2nd July 2009, 18h

SUMMERFEST

4th of July vs. Caliente

Kinkade Royal Bar and tombola!

Saturday, 4th July 2009, 18h

„Thomas Kinkade, The Painter of Light, creates glorious paintings from simple inspirations: family, tradition, community and a celebration of the beauty and goodness of God's creation. These motivations have illuminated the body of work that is collected and cherished throughout the world. [...] Visit www.thomaskinkade.com for more information about Thom.“

For his parodic video Kunstmarkt TV (Art Market TV), 2008, German artist Christian Jankowski engaged a professional teleshopping-moderator for advertising artworks by art-stars like Jeff Koons. The specific kind of „teleprompter-rhetoric“ that is used for such kind of television-formats, asks questions about our often diluted talking about art, about today's distribution channels in the course of digitalization and thus about the symbolic and economic ascriptions of valuation that are imposed on art. The American painter and businessman Thomas Kinkade (*1958, lives and works in Sacramento) who is marketing himself with the addendum «Painter of Light», has disposed his paintings already long ago officially to the great mass via teleshopping-channels. The copyright «Thomas Kinkade, Painter of Light» uses besides telemarketing other ultra-commercial marketing strategies. Pretended, more than 11 millions Anglo-American and Anglo-Saxon households are decorated with graphic-prints and merchandise-articles, emanating from the original Kinkade-paintings, of the meanwhile millionaire. Kinkade's over-sentimentalized, candy images with their stable pastorage and regionalist-patriotic subjects, are in America and meanwhile also in England available in nearly 400 licensed Thomas-Kinkade-galleries and mainly via internet.

On the basis of a choice of „Kinkade-products“ the week-long exhibition Selected Works From A Private Collection: Thomas Kinkade aims to take a closer look at this phenomenon that is undermining any kind of etiquettes of „good art“. Especially in the course of the current economic crisis after the boom and its influence on the artworld – with a look on Kinkades practice of a maximised effort- or rather marketing-strategy of shallow contents – questions on our expectations and ideas about art and also about how ascriptions of value and art marketing work today, can be asked again. Apparently the unabashed mass marketing of Kinkades «life affirming»-repro-art and the motives of homey and Christian values transporting idylls, are capable to be calm societal longings. Kinkade's paintings, often described as «Chocolate Box Art», can be examined under the notion of kitsch as they badly stress our taste criteria when regarded under aesthetic standpoints. The paintings that are done with oversaturated colour and painted with hardly bearable and deadly serious «saccharin-sweetness», how a critic characterised the mostly deserted landscapes with bridges, cottages, clearings or small town portraits, are dived in a pictorial-sentimental light by the artist. With these light-plays Kinkade, avowed Christian and republican brings his spiritual-Christian messages and partly also concrete allusions on biblical scenes into the snuggeries. Just as every of his paintings is dedicated to his wife Nanette with a «N» that is painted on every canvas to hence let take part the world in his autobiography.

Another aspect in the business of Kinkade is his handling with master and copy: on the one hand Kinkade offers, a maximised democratisation of art by reproductions of artworks that are affordable as well easily available by mail. At the same time the works try to imitate masters by the addition of «real» brush strokes that are painted by assistants directly on some of the prints. The masters do not attain the market and move from one licensed Kinkade-gallery to the next.

At the same time Kinkade is maintaining a mannered handling with likewise available «limited masters». These much more expensive works are furnished each with an applied hair of the artist as a ultimate gesture to demonstrate originality. Thus the exhibition of the «phenomenon Kinkade» – to emphasize at this point once more that the interest of the project is not prime in formal-aesthetic questions – is of great interest precisely in the commercial context of a gallery where the discussion how to bargain values of symbol- and current values ever is debated anew.

The works presented in the exhibition are not for sale und are raffled off on both evenings.

Concept by Raphael Gygax

Text by Valérie Knoll with assistance by Raphael Gygax.