



Bildender Künstler

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## Dr. Hermann Ühlein, Kunsthistoriker, Kurator, Autor

### Eyes made of stone?

The „Earth Guardians“ by Jürgen H. Block

They are watching us. They are following us. They are fixed on us. It is not only that they are looking at us. They are turning the tables: They have an eye firmly on those, who are looking at them, they might be silent, but alert and vigilant.

The artist Jürgen H. Block entitled these works „Earth Guardians“. Guardians of the earth? Guardians made of earth? At first sight these figures appear to be human: head, eyes, nose, mouth. They seem to have faces because the layer of rice paper evokes the impression of a kind of skin. The surface of the paintings is looking alive and sanguine. The figures, however, do not have bodies and the supposed necks are steles which are reminiscent of a telescope or a scouring rush. These are no human beings. The paintings do not create any pictorial space, they have no limits, backgrounds at most, sometimes graded. The „Earth Guardians“ seem to emerge from nowhere and are around, everywhere.

Guardians are reliant on good eyes. The artist has to take his time to find them in the Eifel area near Monschau, a little town. He may find slate here, stones and fractions. Being splitted into thin slabs they reveal their inner structures. Forms and figures become visible, they result from sedimentations, layer over layer. Geological history en miniature. If the artist succeeds in a perfect splitting his imagination may recognise the forms and designs which are similar to the eye of a human being. It is really hard to believe but: The artist does not modify anything. Later he will arrange and compose these „eyes“, but he will not change or manipulate them by drawing or painting. The way they are they will be applied on the canvas. After being hidden in the dark they finally see the light of the day.

Even in former series of his art Jürgen H. Block applied fragments of slate on his paintings but in connection with non-representational painting. By now –beginning with the pairs of eyes– he creates figures in human form with faces made of stone, with eyes made of earth.

These eyes which are gazing at us from faraway times are banked by the artist from the deeper layers of our earth to the surface. From this point of view one might even conceive the selection of the colors in the backgrounds. These are the colors of earth –layer by layer put on canvas, between canvas and rice paper, finally on rice paper–surrounding the „Earth Guardians“. Guardians are reliant on good eyes. The „Earth

Guardians“ by Jürgen H. Block have knowing eyes. Coming out of the earth they know about the earth. They are aware of the coming and going, the circuit of nature, they know about the fertility of the earth and they know about the hazards that are caused by man and confront the earth.

The „Earth Guardians“, however, are no human beings, they are artworks. And the artist Jürgen H. Block stands behind these works. Seeking, searching and finally finding forms he charges the neutral materials with creative energy. Slate coming from the Eifel area (Germany) and Chinese rice paper are not combined by chance. The „Earth Guardians“ exemplarily stand for Block’s vita and career as an artist. He interwove his thinking with the character of the „Earth Guardians“. Thus the complex artworks even imply an ecological statement. The „Earth Guardians“ by Jürgen H. Block guard the earth and remind us of the integrity of creation, global in the open language of art.