

Ulrike Arnold: Earth painting in a threatened environment

Looking at Ulrike Arnold's earth paintings over the past 40 years, they are special in their subtle, fine surfaces which crackle with their multi-faceted grains and flowing textural movements of earth materials. What is striking, is the homogeneity of her output which is far from the loud and vocal contemporary cries for attention. She started using earth colors in the late 70s after visiting the neolithic cave paintings of Lascaux. It was then she developed a clear agenda for her art: to paint with earth pigments and crushed rocks in naturally outstanding places all over the world. From Australia to the Indian subcontinent, from Africa to Antarctica, from South America to Japan, she has travelled the globe to paint on canvas wherever her research took her. Over forty years she collected earth pigments and rock colors from all over the world, adding meteorite dust after a fateful meeting with a meteorite researcher who provides her with this extraterrestrial substance.

All her pigments are natural in a profound sense: they have matured in the surface of our planet over thousands of years.

The crescendo of voices bringing to our attention the dangers of global warming and excessive exploitation of the sensitive skin of our planet, has given

a new and vibrant context to the work of a life time: the harmony and beauty Arnold has captured and distilled in her canvases is endangered and threatened as never before. Decades of abuse of our natural resources highlight the fragility of the very stuff that her paintings are made of - which is none other than the ground on which we tread.

Arnold has combined all of the pigments she has collected over the past 40 years in two large canvases, a 7m rectangle and a giant circle. These two canvases are a sum of her work, she has used colors from all her trips and venues to create a harmonious and beautiful ensemble, a call to every individual and to all nations for peace and protection of our natural environment. Both formats have long been part of her repertoire. When they combine, they form a giant exclamation mark and become a powerful statement to move forward, set aside differences and act on the existential threat to our planet.

Dr. Maria Krosigk