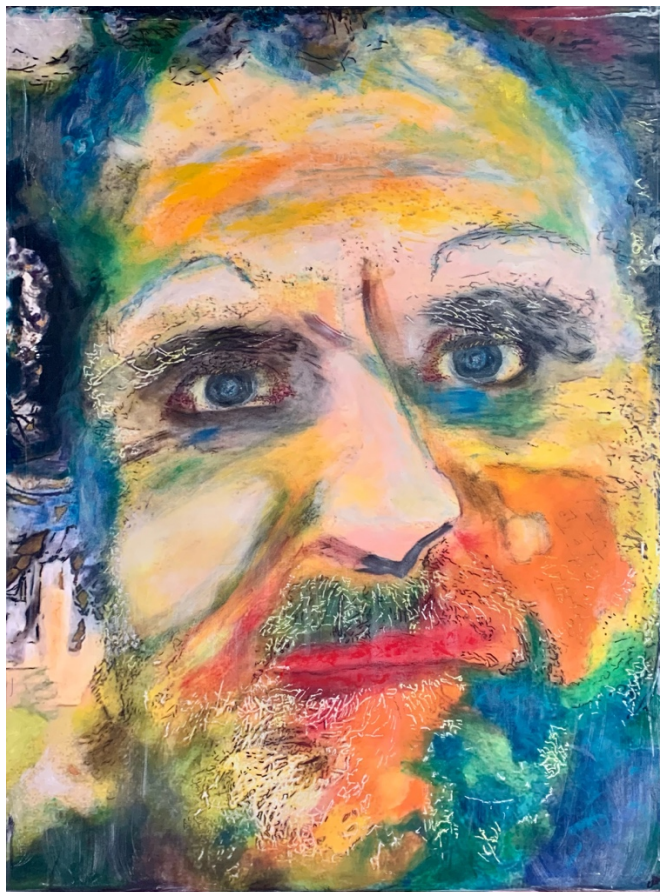


Julian Schutting

À propos de

CLEMK

Sensations of a poet



Ein Essay

À propos de CLEMK



Essay des österreichischen Dichters Julian Schutting

Science, as we know, is measured by clear, verifiable results, whereas art, ideally, is not clear but ambiguous, and this allows every art consumer to find their own interpretation, which is no longer bound by logic (a winter poem, a winter landscape will hardly be interpreted as midsummer) but by the intentions of the poet, the painter. We consumers don't have to worry about them, unless it's out of private interest.

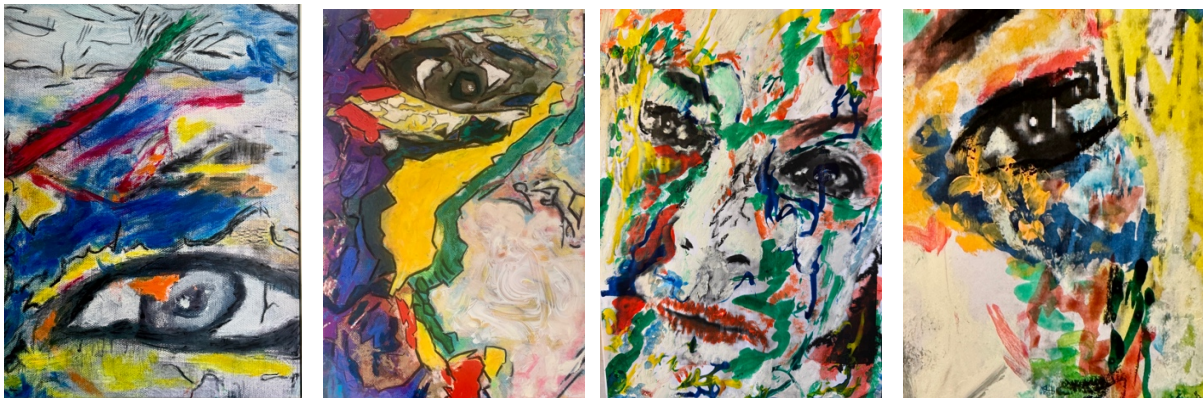
If the respective work of art is as successful as possible, it has already emancipated itself from its creator, has slipped away from him. We adhere to the result, whatever its intention was! And the artist doesn't have to be aware of what the viewer has very well sensed - my example is a collection of love poems - a reader describes them earlier as farewell poems to this love than I manage to do with the sudden departure of this love from the love poems.

The interpretation of abstract paintings is somewhat different - should we be content to allow the interplay of forms and colours to have a strict effect on us without trying to track down content? Did the painter not only think in terms of shapes and colours? Since childhood, we have been accustomed to giving names to cloud formations travelling through the sky - look, a glowing red school of fish! Look, a sleeping fat woman! Beautiful islands! And once we have grown up talking like this, the wind can carry several busts of Beethoven past us, strange two-headed and multi-legged people who only exist as clouds. And a moon can become a haven of peace amidst all the ghosts:

Master ClemK gives us several pictures with one picture, depending on which of the four sides you look at as a base - if you look at it from another of the four, you have a quite different one in front of you - and that reminds us of a Tyrolean blind man who, from a carpet picture, I don't know how many he got described by visitors and was thus the master of so many who described it to him and which he himself felt in one way or another.

ClemK refines this into a method: he takes a detail from a picture, preferably an eye, and inserts it in a new environment into a picture that is still being created - it becomes the centre of its own new picture, which has become autonomous.

I don't know of any other painter who does this. He carries out an organ transplant, as it were, from an original picture, and it succeeds - not a foreign body has taken root elsewhere, the transplanted detail lives on in the image and has brought forth new life of its own. It cannot be said that he has exploited the original two-eyed image in favour of the non-one-eyed one. Something like magic seems to be involved. With this process of a kind of reutilisation, he pays homage to a detail - a magical eye, his own or awakened by him? It is a compositional process that is characteristic of his art. A modern principle of recycling, but the recycled remains untouched in its original place! Transplanting one image detail to incorporate it into another is one of ClemK's methods, developed by him.



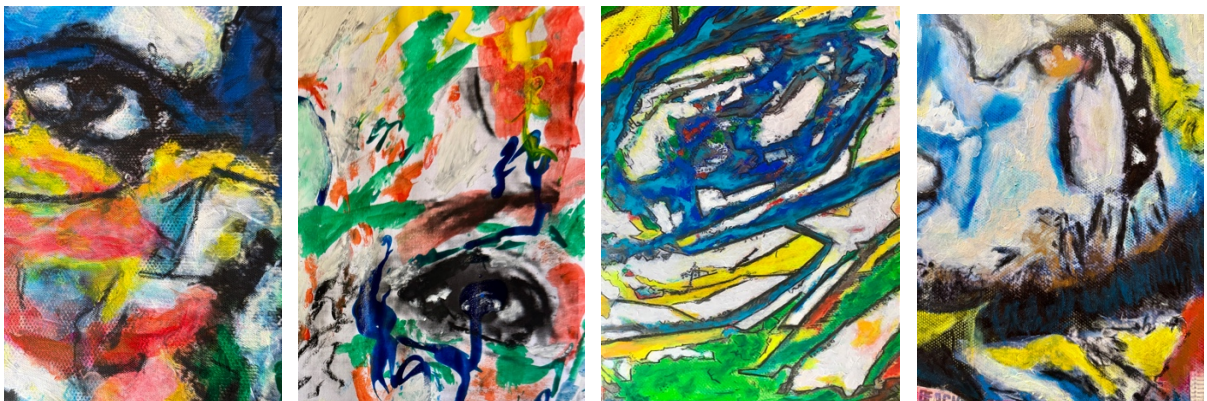
Magic trick of a repeat offender, not a lazy trick. He realises his concept of art in a highly original way, without any self-cocettery. If someone else were to copy him, it would be plagiarism!

As far as his technique is concerned: in portraits, ClemK takes pictures of the person he photographed unnoticed in the first step, enlarges them to the point of distorting blurriness, colours the developed photos in the third step and photographs them again in the fourth step in order to then clarify the physiognomic characteristics with the brush.



In his laudatory speech on the occasion of a solo exhibition in Bergamo in 2023, Roberto Ianotta interestingly refers to the Swiss psychiatrist Rorschach, who presented his patients with inkblot pictures of similar appearance, to which they then unconsciously made important statements about their personality in spontaneous comments, until then unknown to themselves.

The master sets to work on a similarly large scale. His works vibrate with the energy that has produced them - motorways and expressways race along, or are they parallel rivers whose flowing speed ensures that they do not intersect at infinity? Many things start to rotate, turning not only on their own axis - if you immerse yourself in these images, which are reminiscent of aeroplane shots, you get dizzy! Yes, many things revolve around themselves.



Allow me now to engage in spontaneous interpretations on the basis of pictures that are particularly dear to me, and it would be interesting to hear what completely different ideas you have.

A fair-weather sky, cloudlessness, a morning that makes you get up cheerfully and feel that the world is in order - unless this cheerfulness is taken away from you by psychological gloom, against which even such a world view cannot prevail - then you have before you, for example, an attack by low-flying bombers, a kind of air raid like the one the Germans once launched on England (before you), but not a sea battle, and this war would take place on water, on land and in the air:



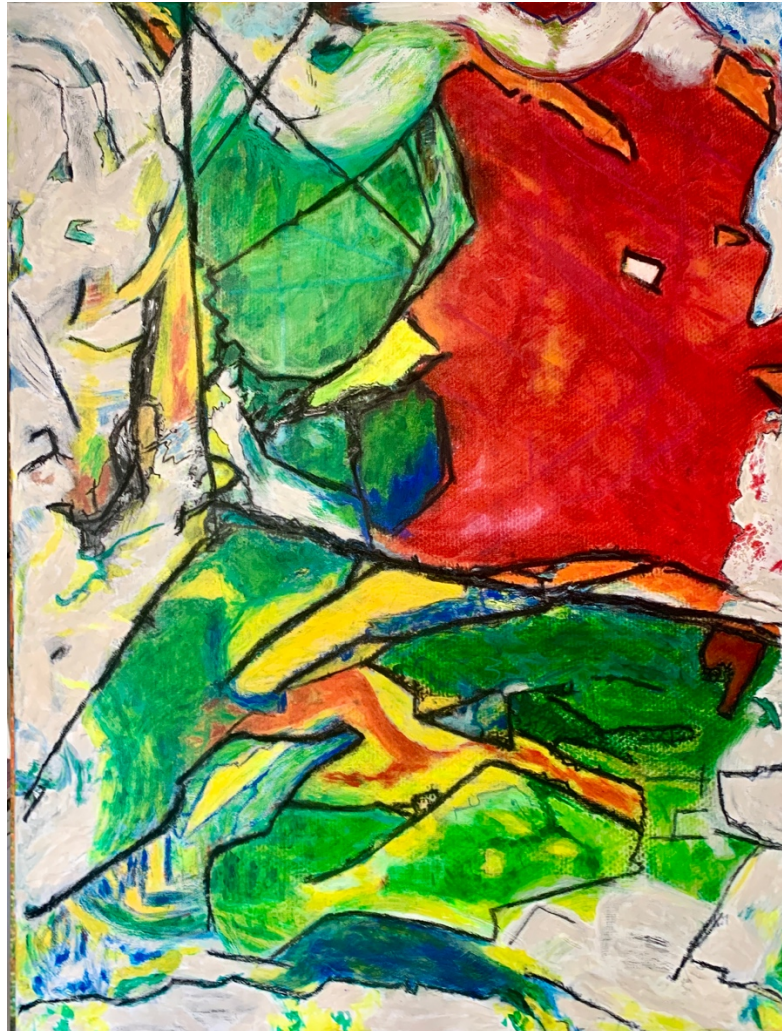
Does nature, no longer able to defend itself, resist in vain the technical perfection of its inherent powers by means of a flying machine, copied from the bent, viable tree trunks - A battering ram with a grappling hook, a bent tree trunk made of iron, approaches from the haunted airspace, once called the sky.

Deeper below it comes to its support, not defence, a fighter jet approaches - having copied its craft from soaring dolphins. But it is equipped with explosives; its aggressive red colour betrays the desire to fight. Like the construction machine, it also has grappling hooks attached to its sides. (later, when your gloom lightens at the sight of the lightning-blue sky or a sea, untouched by the air - and probably also sea battle, you succeed for a moment in renaturalising the fighter jet: you have a crab thrown into boiling water in front of you):

In the lower third of the picture, the air and sea battle is already over: a small military cemetery with black crosses (there are three, two thieves were crucified with Jesus), and you think of the thousands of white crosses that spread around Verdun.

In one corner, like avalanche fences, like the remains of anti-aircraft guns, still pointed skywards, you have a pile of shattered swastikas in front of you. Where, in the midst of this highly explosive sunrise, is Clemk's resting place?

Portrait format. High up in profile, a red beast seems to be about to kiss, but wants to devour the green-eyed man standing at its side; he is held defenceless behind bars reminiscent of garden fences.



Or:

High above, a red-faced man en profil seems to be about to bite a green-eyed man, it is not a Judas kiss; he wants to breathe strength into him rather than devour him. The green man is held defencelessly bound behind bars reminiscent of garden fences, pressed close to the face of the wire. Is he gagged like this to prevent him from crying out in torture? The wire around his neck is particularly tight, but there is no sign of suffocation in his exposed eye, no sign of paralysis from being strangled, the restraints on his body seem to have loosened with the help of the red man. A stranded fish at the bottom. Symbol of the stranded sea giving way to the land (three question marks attached) -

Where the receding sea has raged, the green has become fertile farmland, new land after the Flood (two question marks). Remnants of the sea are allowed to remain. The magical eye of the deity hovers benevolently over the whole, be it immediately after the destruction of the world and or the new creation of the human world - Noha and his kind are assured of the continued existence of the animal world, which was saved in pairs.

scheinbar uneingeschränktes Chaos, wie wir es verstehen, weist er mit abgrenzenden Linien in die Schranken – so entstehen Räume, in denen er sich zurechtfinden kann. Intuitiv wild Or

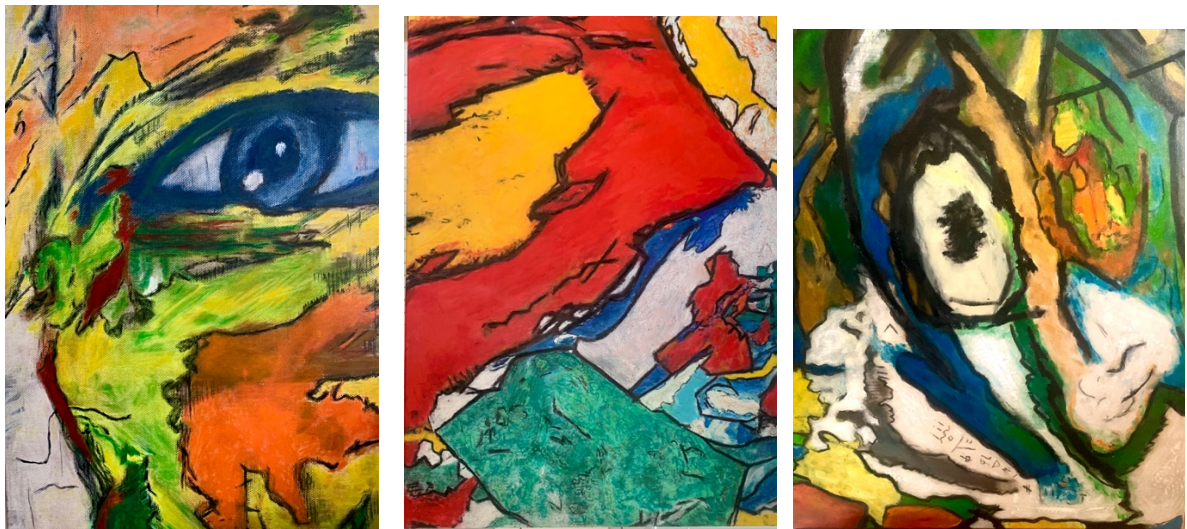
would it be more plausible to regard red and green as brothers belonging to two equal races, as sons of Noah, whether they are called Shem, Ham or Japheth, even though science has long since dropped the term RACE as obsolete?

Not an eye that would be his and God's. But at the very bottom, a human-looking figure curves around the military cemetery - the Mater doloris of all the fallen!

Clemk defines his paintings as ORDERED CHAOS –

It begins, then the demarcations that create order take place. Islands are found in the midst of the organising chaos, providing calm.

He withdraws from chaotic times, he needs safe islands from which he can conquer the whole (the rest of the picture). What belongs (and is sorted) in this way is often misunderstood as a provocation.

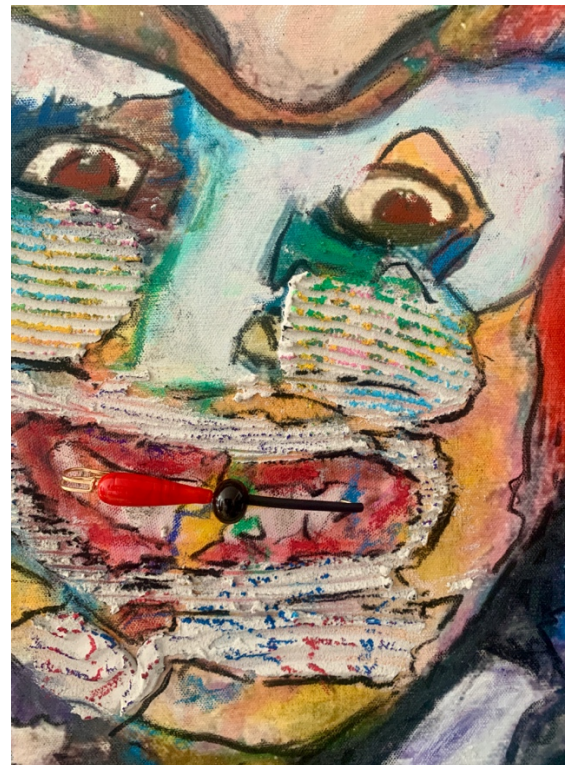


Nature, he says, is positive chaos from which wonderful things arise. Civilisation, on the other hand, creates negative chaos - we must therefore subjugate the negative chaos of civilisation. Islands are safe harbours; they arise automatically when we (i.e. we painters) know how to divide up the space - when we say where to drop anchor instead of harbour. Freedom of interpretation is left to us viewers as soon as the chaos on the canvas is under control.

At the beginning, he allows the chaos on the picture surface to prevail - then he has to sort himself out, i.e. to order himself and find a point of calm - he obviously enters a meditative phase, because at first he wants to leave the viewer to the chaos alone, then he realises that he himself needs an orderly space in order to be able to orientate himself. This is almost a religious view: we humans bring disorder to nature and should soon find a point of calm. There must be a point for each of us where we can stabilise ourselves in order to control our instincts and not perish with nature, which has been violated. His pictures are not a provocation, but images of human chaos.

He begins to paint wildly, following his unconscious; then he endeavours to calm it down with delicately executed details.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the ancient Greeks and Romans understood (understood) chaos quite differently than we do, than Haydn did: Not a wild mess: for them, in the beginning was empty, immeasurable space. This had to be filled first – of this, perhaps, Clemk, who has a horror vacui, has an inkling. He is ultimately an abstract artist, but he is also a political one, a committed opponent of colonising, imperialistic, technocratic interventions in the lives of us all.



The face in the face of the almost identical face does not resemble a sheep with two heads, unfit for life; it is a dream face. The mother face of the dreamer knows nothing of the child conceived in her dream. Is the daughter of this female character staring so wide-eyed because, like the priests of the Delphic oracle, she sees hidden disaster in others?

The face from which this second face emerges has (or would it be her brain?) the ascending tiers of an amphitheatre as a headdress – yes, that fits! As visitors to ancient tragedies, women have often fainted – not so much because of the content, but thanks to the eerie beauty of the recited verses!

ClemK shows a secret sense of irony in the face of the face: the mouth of the face is held shut by a metal clamp that is a piece of fine jewellery – please keep your mouth shut! Don't talk such nonsense! Otherwise, the motto for you is: Si tacuisses, philosophus ecetera.

Some of his faces could be derived from a visit to the Ethnological Museum, from the diverse masks of so-called primitive peoples and their face painting and tattoos, also for reasons of necromancy, i.e. establishing a connection with the ancestors – remnants of which are present in our carnival masks, which at best allow children to glimpse something of the past significance in a fright, even of themselves : When they step in front of the mirror with their colourfully painted faces, a shiver touches them.

In the portraits of his friends, photographed and edited by him, he or she alienates himself or herself by transforming them into masks of themselves with well-considered lines, often reminiscent of the scars left by students who have been beaten by a duelling fraternity: they are proud of their scars! As if there were still a memory in them of times when notches on the face had a mythological meaning, of invocations of the ancestors, for example. And ClemK has a penchant for natural philosophy, has retained his Catholic belief in an afterlife into adulthood!



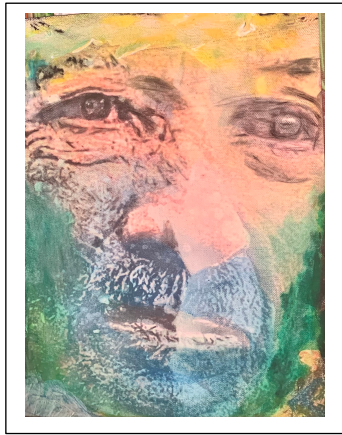
With a hand reaching far and wide, friend ClemK seems to have compressed half of North Africa into a desert landscape, an intact natural landscape with tiny forests. It gives us hope to see this and think that nature is fighting back against its violation, that the exploitation of the indigenous people will soon be over.



The magic eye of God rests on the whole and delights in the renewal of the innocent original state. But if the observer is pessimistic about the original inhabitants and the stolen innocence of their reward, then the eye of God becomes a fish that seeks to find its way back to the original sources from the exploited and dried-up rivers.

If it were, then the incantation of a trend reversal in a world that propagates more and more greed would be in the desert air! – Yes, sources of restoration can be sensed in the movement of the whole.

Wien im Oktober 2024 Julian Schutting



Julian Schutting is arguably one of the most interesting Austrian authors today, and one of the truly great poets of his country.

In more than fifty books to date, Schutting writes in conscious engagement with the tradition of literature, art and philosophy. The result is sophisticated, reflective texts.

Among the numerous awards for his literary work, the following should be emphasized:

He has been awarded the Grand Prize for Literature (1981), the Georg Trakl Prize for Poetry, the [Prize of the City of Vienna](#) for Literature (1988) and the Gold Medal of Honour for Services to the State of Vienna (1997). In 2015 Schutting was awarded the Gert Jonke Prize, in 2022 the H. C. Artmann Prize.

Impressions *CLEMK* studios in Vienna and Munich.

