

WORKS FROM 1984-1988

The creation of Miloš Šejn is motivated and determined by his need to articulate the reciprocity of the natural and the human, to make his personal relation to nature more communicable and to give it a more common validity. Nature is for the artist an absolute quality and value and he enters it not as observer, but as participant. In Šejn's 'older works is the tendency to formalize the perception of natural situations and processes, say in preconceptual photographic series, beginning already about 1962, but also in freed "disaestheticized" activities as for example collecting natural pigments from various places or dying pieces of textile (in the end adjusted like pictures) in the ferrous water or slump of some locality. But the author never succumbed to conceptualist strictness, an equally important feature of his work is 'the active application of his physical, verbatim his body presence. Many of his photographic series were in fact a subjective document of wandering (which he probably was the first to actualise in our country), other arose as a kind of correlation of natural processes and human movements (Zebín Hill and the Moon, 1982), or they documented the expressive lighting and visualizing of cave spaces by fire (Mažarná, 1982; Pekárna, 1986), thus at the same time referring to the ancient settlement in these places as well as to the rituals of their inhabitants of that time. The body aspect is even more important in a series of realizations on paper since the rear 1982, either in form of books or large drawings. Recordings With Stone on Stone were a body action as well as the trace of natural material in situ, large drawings in which the print (of a rock, a brook etc.) is combined with natural pigments found in the same place, area report of a subjective, spontaneous action and the given facts of the milieu. These works on paper, sometimes in the studio confronted with the artificial structure of a geometrical linear drawing, and the latest realizations on textile bands have certain morphologic similarities with some neoexpressive or postmodernist paintings. I think, however, that it is really only a similarity, even though a very interesting one. The starting points, the sense and the aim of Šejn's work are different. Really near he stands to those post conceptual artists who have found the unexchangeable form of human presence in nature, as Hamish Fulton with his lyrical, subjective documentation of wandering, Wolfgang Laib with his ritual collecting and presenting in exhibitions almost immaterial pollen of plants, or Milan Maur precisely documenting details of natural processes taking place in a limited space, beginning with changing shadows and ending, say, with bird flights. Šejn's latest documentations are a kind of rudimentary sings of landscape, formed in direct interaction with it. Over the creation of these artists a word comes to our mind that is not too much of a favourite in contemporary art - it is the word humility. We might more correctly say an active humility not excluding the participation of the artist's subject in the realization of the

work, humility as presupposition and part o f the partnership of Man and Nature.

Jiří VALOCH

Waterfall Maple Brook in The Giant Mountains 18/7/1988
found pigments on paper, 11,8 m long

On two next pages Vestiges of Iron, 1987 found pigments on textile, detail and installation