

*renmen – ununterbrochen* by Takayuki Daikoku  
(Sculptures, Objects and Drawings)  
19.07. – 17.08.2013

*renmen – ununterbrochen* is the first solo exhibition of the Japanese sculptor Takayuki Daikoku, a resident of Rathenow in the rural district of Havelland, at Semjon Contemporary.

The artist's point of departure is invariably the material wood, won by him from raw tree trunks and strong branches, still inclusive of bark, which are cut up into peculiar 'basic shapes' and newly reassembled. In further processing, using Japanese paper and Kakishibu – a brownish natural staining agent won from the ferment of the kaki fruit – varying degrees of emphasis are laid on points of form and substance, which may be read as abstract and sign-like metaphors for buds, flowers or fruit, but do not depict nature in an imitative way.

The artist places his work within the Japanese tradition of joining nature with the works created by man, reminding us of pictures of Zen gardens. However, he succeeds in using a formal vocabulary that is very much his own, positioning himself within a new context, by linking up to tradition and still finding his own peculiar language. Recourse to natural forms amounts to more than their mere reproduction but rather continuously undergoes a process of reshaping and reorganisation. The artist thereby achieves a universal conjunction that is not limited to a type of understanding based on the given cultural background. The works seem familiar and strange at the same time.

Within the area of tension produced in the light of the separate drawings – they can be conceived as abstract codes for forms borrowed from nature or interpreted in its context – and the sculptures, presented in cubic metal frames and by way of pedestal structures, invocative of tables and shelves, the exhibition may well be experienced as a walk through an unconventionally landscaped garden. The playful approach (in terms of art history) to the conflictual duality of sculpture and pedestal is enriched by the additional level of reference to the reception and history of the Japanese garden as an interaction between the small isolated forms created by man within the context of what is a bigger (analogously shaped) whole.

The spacious pedestal architecture, with its focus on height, may also be conceived as an ambivalent space between domesticity and functionality. Here another horizon is being opened up, by which the imaginary garden is conveyed onto other levels, its organisation on the surface being translated into the dimension of height, thus finding ways towards breaking away from established thought patterns and arriving at new opportunities.

*renmen – ununterbrochen* can be understood as a metaphor for the eternal cycle of birth and death, destruction and restoration.

Berlin in June 2013  
Philipp Zobel and H. N. Semjon