



2 Streicheln Quadrate / Stroke Squares, 2009  
Acryl auf Nessel / Acrylic on muslin, 180 x 150 cm

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Adamski quadratisch: Five Sides of the Circle

Side I: Form

Squares, as we know, have four equal 90-degree angles and sides of equal measure, and belong to the group known as quadrilaterals. It is a stable form, connoting the responsible, the clear and the basic. But what happens to us when such a stable form begins to think, to feel and even bend, as if the form were suddenly flexible, so malleable that it becomes round, and yet still maintaining its four-posted form? "To not give up, till the world is square", painted Adamski in an earlier series. In this series, the paintings propose a feat of similar utopian proportion, its literal opposite: to not give up till the square is world. So Adamski thus takes us full circle, pun intended. For these are squares that strive to roundness like a circus ring where, behind the guise of trapeze acts and clowning, one senses struggle, smells sweat and a discrete cry of pain. They are squares that scream in silence and bleed in black, but, like all of Adamski's work, do not "give up". They recreate the world on new terms, their own.

Side II: Canvas

The canvases are not a fresh, new white. Their color is cream, but without the richness of cream. These are yellowed whites, and like Miss Havisham's wedding dress, they also mark the place of "great expectations" not met, of the perfect wedding that never took place, fixed in time at the hour of deepest disappointment. The groom declined, and all was frozen. Even the wedding cake remained as it was, on the table, year after year. And here, looking at Adamski's canvas, we wonder, "where is the usual white, the promise of fresh snows?". Not here, not now. Here, we find the application of black paint, spit onto and into the threads. Adamski cuts his cloth, divides it into clearly defined sections. One, a place for script, another a splattered surface, and then a space of solid black. From time to time, a figurative fragment hangs like an old bow, a brooch or a pin, from the sad cotton surface. A fading chair weeps, a vague figure on crutches searches for balance. These enter and leave the canvas' field of meaning like ghosts in an old house, and we hear the soft moans of the unattended, unheard and unloved.

#### Side III: Color

No color. Or rather, the gradations of what once was color are now varying blacks and grays. Hans-Peter of pastel palettes, or bold reds, golds and silvers, seems to have lost his coloring box, or has he perhaps misplaced it somewhere in the atelier? "Tears must become square". Sadness must fit within form, at least in so far that it may leave the heart, enter the painting and be contained there. One could say that these are works of mourning (Trauerbilder), and yet they are not "traurig" — not only. They observe sadness with the distance that allows for its full expression. The artist masters emotion and drives it forward. He works the gears, leading it skillfully across a landscape of gray tones and territories, these also of his own design. And in spite of their colorlessness, there is an irrefutable sensuality to these paintings. They offer refuge, a sanctuary, the gazebo in the garden, a place for silent observation. This place is precious to the artist's own sense of dignity, one senses. Adamski, at no point, attempts to suck us into his square or his sadness. For that he is too gracious a host. We enter his pain by invitation and wander through the work willingly, inspection, retrospection, observing the figures and surfaces as one is wont to do in a museum, or an art gallery. Intimate and sober, their text points to suffering as a palatable thing. The cathartic moment has passed. Not tears, but the tear-stained. Dark spots that once were sprayed onto a wet canvas have now dried. Distance facilitates compassion.

#### Side IV: Script

To be curious about form, to juxtapose what seems in it to be stable, proportioned and firm, with the more explosive realm of emotion is a recurring facet of Adamski's work as a whole, and may be summed up as "a sense of play". Playfulness and dry humor are found in the wistful and random way Adamski separates and combines elements: off the cuff. And never without a hint of irony woven in. Irony is not foreign to suffering, and often serves as its loyal companion. In "Wes alb aben Quadrate runde Seelen", the egg Adamski has painted is black, a fierce and fertile black, that imbues the surface with a deep pulsation or throbbing. The velvet sheen of its surface points to a vitality immanent at the center of pain, promising somehow the new, the emergence out from the heart of darkness. In "Streicheln Quadrate", the text stumbles between script and meaning. At first, the eye may read "Streichquartett" and the dark sounds of the bass bow sweeps the strings. Once corrected, one re-reads "Streicheln", and that same bow brushes the canvas surface, the charming result of misreading. Adamski allows readings and misreadings to co-exist, and in this is a form of generosity. He suggests meaning, without forcing it, allowing ample open space for our own private readings. In the days when his canvas were colored, Adamski



also worked with script, with a similar sense of play. But, here, it is as if the game has changed, and become more existential. Language is less a line than a chord, pulling us back up from the deepest of wells. Or like an umbilical cord, it proffers a return, back into life. "My father", Adamski explains, "was a man of simple means, but nonetheless a gentleman. He had his name embroidered by hand onto tags, to have them sewn into his suits by a tailor". This memory, like his father's tags, is sewn into these canvases, like into a suit. In the place where art redeems all things, the canvases addresses the finest of weaves, childhood memories, suggesting that what is oldest and deepest within us, is that which provides the strongest of cords for our re-entry into life. Through the egg is his and our return. Not as child this time, but as an ancient, an elder, an evergreen. The fire tree painted here is one that may endure all seasons and all shocks, year after year. It takes a strong stand within the square, a strong desire to embrace the new. And though these painting remain clothed to the very last of the series in a cloak of suffering, the ride back over the Styx is an elegant and memorable one. We, who have stood watch, take a seat next to him in the boat quite willingly, for the dark river is shining like silver with moonlight, and there is something we can trust in the steady strokes of the oars.

#### Side V: Full Circle

"Augen zu", Adamski orders, startling me somewhat out of my thoughts. Before he hauls the final painting to be hung on the wall of his atelier, I close my eyes and experience my own moment on the river, the thick darkness, interrupted by threads of light through thinning eyelids. I go back, if for only a moment, to that which both precedes and follows life and its productivity. I feel the pain of absence, of my own life and of what I imagine, might be his. "Open!", he says excitedly, and before me is a great square, rich and pulsating with intention, with the will to paint and to thrive. Triumphant, Adamski stares back at me, with that way he has of being dead serious, but smiling. Entitled "singen quadratisch", this is the last in the series of the paintings. Again allowing myself to misread, I voice the words, "singen quadrastisch". To sing drastically. Ah, that's it. I read it again, and realize my mistake. "To sing square", is what was written. The letters of this script, in part almost transparent, are soft. Where blue sky might have reigned, there is now a horizon of rich, intense black, painted thick, like spilled oil. To sing square is indeed a drastic thing, I think.

"Look! It's like the shade on a train", Adamski suggests, "pulled down, suddenly!". But only a third of the way, I think. To close the shade, it's not yet time. Not here, not now. The world once gathered into squares, now brings that square back into the world, not as the world would have it, but as he, the artist, lives it. In a way, Adamski has won. His squares have given birth to the world, and we are honored to have witnessed it here.





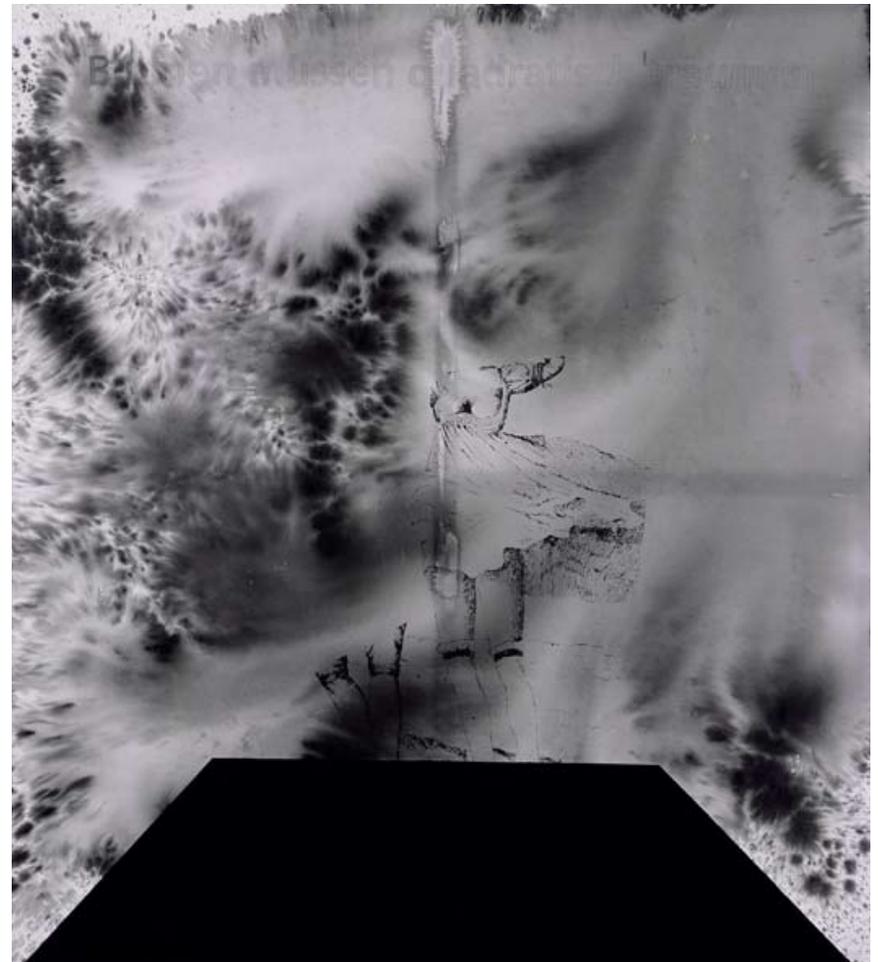
5 Tränen müssen quadratisch werden I / Tears Must Become Square I, 2007  
Acryl auf Nessel / Acrylic on muslin, 180 x 150 cm

... to free thought from thought, obliging it not to abdicate but to think more than it can, to think something other than what is possible for it.

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... um das Denken vom Denken zu befreien, nicht um es zum Abdanken zu zwingen, sondern dazu, mehr zu denken, als es denken kann, anderes als das ihm Mögliche.

Maurice Blanchot



6 Blumen müssen quadratisch träumen / Flowers Must Dream Square, 2008  
Acryl auf Nessel / Acrylic on muslin, 200 x 180 cm