

# M+B

## MARTIN DENKER

**Sheets from the sketchbook of a Synesthetic—Fragments of a Restless World**  
by, Hans Irrek (2007)  
*translated from German*

In Steven Spielberg's science fiction *Minority Report*, police possess a visionary technology that enables them to expose murderers before the actual crime is committed.

These crimes are visualized on freely suspended, transparent surfaces, onto which the offender and the murder are projected in fragmented images before the murder occurs. At a staggering speed, the projection displays images from the future that virtually appear out of nowhere, overlay and display next to each other for fractions of a second and then disappear, replaced by other combinations of image sequences. The viewer of these vivid images is virtually captivated by this presentation that overlaps the present and the future.

Martin Denker's large-scale work evokes a similar impression as these scenes from Spielberg's movie, which emerged in the last few years. On one hand, images of immense density, exploding with details and structure. On the other hand, light and transparent, as if the individual picture layers were made of superimposed filigree film. Most of all, it is the effect—how the layers and details are arranged—which reminds us of how Tom Cruise generates the visualization with a few virtuosic gestures, intermixing the individual scenes and making the future flow into the present.

### *Simultaneous Experience of the Present Time*

A first look at Denker's pictures is enough to wonder about the origin of these images. A look at the sketchbooks and image files will lead us on the right track!

When viewing Denker's sketches, we must detach ourselves from the conventional notion of the sketchbook. In this type of viewing, it is important for visual notations—the ideas for the picture determination—to basically take place via two separate picture memories. On one hand, the common sketchbook with its entries, drawings, inserted cut-outs and notes. On the other hand, the computer's hard drive, holding thousands of photos and images that will later flow into the pictures in fragments and details.

Martin Denker once hinted that he is not always able to filter the influences of the environment with all its varying information in the conventional way, and that he perceives many of the acoustic and visual impulses synchronously and with an equally high intensity. This

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automatically leads to a heightened density of the experience, as well as a different mode of filtering, processing and converting the experience into his awareness.

That this way of giving justice to the numerous mouldings of reality—by arranging them synchronously and interlinking them in new ways—must lead to other new and exciting pictures can only be a necessary conclusion. But let's take a look at the entries!

## *The sketch book as a filter for a world of cross-bordering information*

Denker's entries are a visual uncontrolled growth to a perfection. Next to hasty plays on words and notes of upcoming picture titles, we find the extract of all-nighters in front of the Internet's world of images. The play on words or word combinations are oftentimes at the forefront. Chosen because they bring surprising results in the Google image search engine or combined in a way that makes them appear satisfying, but always reflecting the playful appetite of the artist.

It is a delightful mixture switching between emotionally charged images, scientific illustrations, newspaper and magazine photos, architectural drawings, background patterns, reportage photography or pornographic images, which is the way Martin Denker fathoms the state of the world.

The sketchbook delivers the raw material of experiences in this sense, which we can later discover in their filtered details in complexly arranged pictures such as *WelcomeToMandarinaBay*, *IIUltimoParaiso* or *GaGaGarten*, where the layering of images and the synchronous details thrive in their interaction. It becomes clear, in an interesting way, what the course to the finished and ultimately effective picture is.

It is important that one cannot classify Denker. He is not a photographer in the conventional sense and not a painter who has found photography as an extension of his potential. There is no word yet for the way in which Martin Denker works and develops his large-scale photographs. Strictly speaking, they are gigantic collages holding up to fifty layers on top of each other, which represent the only type of expression Martin Denker can effectively use to translate the way he experiences the world.

## *Each picture a discharge of emotions and perceptions*

Denker's restless view of the world is not new, but it is different. It is the view of a solitaire who doesn't belong to a school or grouping and yet can't deny the base of history—so Joseph Cornell's boxes or the brilliant interwovens by Robert Rauschenberg are actual predecessors of such an individual perception. Closer yet is the world of a Takashi Murakami, which has already become the concretely realized image of an extensive fantasy, the draft of its own world.

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Beyond these relationships, the pictures of Martin Denker also have vulnerability, deriving from the artist's right to show society their actions just like a mirror. Here Denker acts as a young artist with his explosive compositions and detailed formats, who does not want to relinquish his rebellious ways to the market. He is authentic and permanent like a tattoo, one who can only cope with everyday life through the creation of something new. This is, per se, the basic prerequisite for the creation process from which pictures, which are so charged with energy they likewise seem to float, originate.

Pablo Picasso once expressed the need for this way of creating pictures as a way of handling everyday life, imagination and emotions. Quite simply, yet quite impressively, he told Christian Zervos: „A painter paints to unload himself of feelings and visions.“