

Text by Anne Avramut, Vienna 2026

Patricia Reinhart's "Wing" series unfolds as a painterly topology of the threshold. The canvases negotiate a movement between suggestion and abstraction, between tectonic tension and organic condensation at the border between figuration and abstraction. The title „Wings“ refers to a sacral iconography whose art-historical depth activates sacred pictorial traditions as well as physiognomic, zoological, and metaphysical structures. In several works in the series, such as „Die Vermessung von Liebe I (zweiter Flügel)“ (The Measurement of Love I (Second Wing)), „Flügel IV (Sandwich IV)“ (Wing IV (Sandwich IV)), and „Flügel V“ (Wing V), this reference appears structurally: as an allusion to a musculoskeletal system, as the remnants of a feathered system, and as traces of a translucent membrane.

This reference is particularly striking in „The Measurement of Love I (Second Wing),“ which formally refers explicitly to Albrecht Dürer's study of a bird's wing. Patricia Reinhart adopts the basic format, the composition along a slight diagonal, and the auratic isolation of the wing as the subject of the image. The color scheme, warm brown and copper tones broken up by fine white highlights, also evokes a closeness to Dürer's original. But where Albrecht Dürer designs the wing as a manifesto of naturalistic precision and divine order, Patricia Reinhart deconstructs this order into a painterly syntax of displacement. The brushstrokes in „The Measurement of Love I (Second Wing)“ break down the feather structure into vibrant clusters of lines, and the original tectonics are overlaid with flowing layers and striking crossings-out. The signature that Albrecht Dürer placed in the lower left corner of his sheet as a sign of identity appears in Patricia Reinhart's work as a visual trace: formally quoted, but semantically open. This refraction transforms the iconographic reference into a critical gesture. What appears to be an order of knowledge in Albrecht Dürer's work coagulates in Patricia Reinhart's work into a palimpsest-like field of resonance: image as archive and painting as a re-enactment of cultural coding. The wing functions here as a structural support: for lightness and load, for semantic overload and formal erosion, for projection and subversion. In the dissolution of the clear feather structure in favor of gestural superimposition, the paradigm of the winged creature is reduced to its material conditions: as an organic fragment, as a memory of a possibility of flight that was never realized.

In their iconographic depth, Patricia Reinhart's wing images touch on Albrecht Dürer's natural history-based feather studies and, beyond that, join a visual genealogy of winged bodies whose historical span ranges from Fra Angelico's seraphic beings of light to Hildegard von Bingen's visionary cosmologies to Odilon Redon's symbolistically enraptured angel figures. In all of the above cases, the wing appears less as an anatomical structure than as an epistemic instrument: as a vehicle of revelation and structural dislocation. Patricia Reinhart takes up these lines of tradition and transforms them into a contemporary form of painterly analysis. In Patricia Reinhart's work, the wing becomes a zone of compression: a threshold between visibility and imagination, an aggregate state of form, color, gesture, and accumulated knowledge. This superimposition transforms the series into a distinct visual concept: a system of traces and structural memory that structurally reformulates the historical motif.

In this series, Patricia Reinhart's painting oscillates between the internal coherence of the composition and an overload of its semantic legibility. The strength of the series lies in this ambivalence: it alludes to the iconographic knowledge of the art system, quotes it with extreme precision, and at the same time eludes any affirmation.

