



The City as a Pictorial Idea: Jochen Pankrath's View of Nuremberg

The cityscape is one of the most tradition-rich motifs in European art history, yet it emerged surprisingly late as an autonomous artistic genre. Early depictions served primarily functional purposes: as settings for religious narratives or as cartographic tools, such as the woodcuts of the *Nuremberg Chronicle* of 1493. It was not until the Renaissance that the city began to be taken seriously as an aesthetic subject. Albrecht Dürer played a pivotal role in this shift. With his watercolors and drawings, he liberated the city view from strict topography and elevated it to an independent pictorial idea. Building on this foundation, the Dutch painters of the 17th century, followed by the Venetian masters such as Canaletto and later the Impressionists, each developed their own interpretation of the urban environment. The cityscape became a medium in which documentation, artistic condensation and subjective perception intertwined.

It is within this historical lineage that Jochen Pankrath positions his new body of work. Known until now for portraits, landscapes and still lifes, the Nuremberg-based painter expands his oeuvre by turning toward the cityscape – a choice that resonates strongly in Nuremberg, one of the genre's historical birthplaces. Pankrath consciously enters a dialogue with this legacy but translates it into a distinctly contemporary visual language. His paintings are not vedute; they do not document the city with topographical precision. Instead, they transform Nuremberg into a rhythmic interplay of forms, surfaces and colors. Roofs, towers, bridges and waterways appear both familiar and newly shaped—poetic condensations rather than literal representations of urban experience.

Jochen Pankrath's approach opens a space in which memory, identity and the present moment converge. He takes up the historical trajectory of the cityscape and transports it into a current artistic context, rendering the genre anew.



What began with Dürer's shift toward an aesthetic understanding of the city finds a vibrant continuation in Jochen Pankrath's work: the city once again becomes an artistic stage where history, perception and individual expression intersect. His Nuremberg cityscapes are not only an evolution of a longstanding tradition but stand confidently as a contemporary position that brings the genre compellingly into the present.

- Anna Bode