

KÖNIG GALERIE

CONNY MAIER

DOMESTIC

16 MAY – 14 JUNE 2020

ST. AGNES | CHAPEL

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Due to the current situation surrounding the Covid-19 epidemic, the exhibition can only be visited after booking a time slot and the gallery will allow a restricted number of visitors at a time into the space to keep everyone safe.

KÖNIG GALERIE presents *Domestic*, an exhibition of current works by the painter Conny Maier. Maier's often ironic-seeming pictures invite us to question contemporary organisation and the degree to which narratives from conventional motifs are created, used and remodelled. They focus on the extreme representation of the apparently everyday as a way of revisiting coded themes from a new perspective.

Domestic sees Maier continue her exploration of the relationship between humans and nature, the title of the exhibition itself alluding to the endeavour to domesticate and tame what is natural. Her collections of images and scenes primarily examine the representation of plants and creatures remodelled by humans to form a system of usage and regulation, the appropriation and subdivision of nature. Her plants appear uniform and striking for good reason: what Maier portrays is the human idea of flowers as brightly coloured, saccharine, rose-like blooms in perfect pinks, yellows and blues, purely for our enjoyment. The deer, too, in *I brought flowers 1*, is delicate and house-trained, nestling on the arm that holds it. The playful style of these pictures heightens the seriousness of the artist's exploration of quintessential themes: nature as the wallpaper of humans, as their hedonistic starting point. The colourful blooms, which seem as though formed from wax, are destroyed as the characters she depicts gorge on them or stuff them into each other's mouths. At the hands of Conny Maier, the early modernist romantic *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (*Luncheon on the Grass*) by Édouard Manet becomes a feast of gluttony entitled *Schwestern* (*Sisters*).

Generic types stripped of any idiosyncratic qualities, with rubbery bodies and distorted faces, the humans in Maier's paintings appear on a level with her uniformly depicted woodland creatures. Only when objectively equalised in this way are they revealed as the unwelcome intruder. The lightness and colour of her paintings transmute into brutal representations of a hidden romanticism and love of nature – a notion alluded to in the series *Verklärung I-III* (*Glorification I-III*), where a nature is depicted that, rather than being a place of healing and refuge for humans, illustrates the misguidedness of their yearnings.

In Conny Maier's paintings, the most rampant plant growth becomes a landscape of monoculture; the natural wilderness becomes a carefully cultivated garden – because the only way humans can realise their natural vision of nature and

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the world is by displacing their actual landscapes. In the paintings of Conny Maier, this fact becomes a utopian dislocation and dystopian game. Her scenes concentrate on the grey area between human constructs and ways of seeing on the one hand, and the underlying truth on the other – a further reason for her decision to create all of the paintings and graphic works for *Domestic* out in the open air.

Conny Maier lives and works in Berlin and Baleal, and has had shows in Berlin, Paris, Lisbon, Cologne, Memmingen, Ulm, Vienna and Los Angeles. The exhibition *Im Trüben* at Ruttkowski;68 heralded a new cycle of works dealing primarily with the relationship between humans and nature – a theme that is further explored in *Domestic*.

Text: Marlene A. Schenk

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