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Martha Jungwirth

Opening: 03.09.2020, 18:00-20:30

Exhibition: 04.09.2020-07.11.2020

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Galerie Mezzanin is pleased to announce Martha Jungwirth's return to our gallery space in Geneva after her two-person exhibition with Albert Oehlen in 2017. This time for her first solo presentation with the eponymous title.

Even though at first glance the abstract and expressionist characteristic of Jungwirth's work might strike the beholder the most, it then often shapeshifts into figurative manifestations with an underlying conceptual "pretext", an important aspect that constitutes her oeuvre, which can be a plethora of things: Greek mythology, impressions from her travels, recent political occurrences, the human body. As an example one of the series, "Delos", assembled in this exhibition is a paradigm of this :

Delos is a small island near Mykonos that used to be a blossoming and holy place for the Greeks in the Antiquity. As the mythology tells, Delos was a floating island on the sea and the only refuge for the pregnant Leto (lover of Zeus), who was pursued by Hera. It was there, where she gave birth to Artemis and Apollo (hence their surnames Delia and Delios). In honour of both deities, the island became a sacred place.

There has been a common thread running through her work since the beginning that is her love for paper, preferably one that shows signs of age, as a medium for painting as well as her distinctive colour schemes, which hold a certain ambiguity of fragility and fierceness/strength at the same time.

"That's my luxury, that's what I need. Not one green, but ten greens, not one red, but twenty reds." A viewer of her paintings once said that you could do that with five or six colors: I doubt it. At best, it would make a dull brown. I'm interested in something else: The different nuances, how do they meet each other? How do they challenge each other?"

A couple of year ago, she started using the carton and paper that had once covered her studio floor as a base for her works mixing new improvised forms with the old paint splashes and debris of her atelier. Only after completion would she mount the torn paper on canvas.

"I don't just paint with brushes, but also with my fingers, with any scraps. depending on how I want the stains."

Her process is characterised by the speed of painting and her intuitive movements as well as something she describes as „senso-motoric“, the urge to return to an almost archaic state of being “before spoken language” and “before Euclid where the straight lines meet at the vanishing point”—“not thinking while painting.”¹ The paintings are “seismograms of inner states“.

1 Martha Jungwirth, „The Ape In Me“ originally published in Protokolle: Zeitschrift für Literatur und Kunst, 1988

Major survey exhibitions of Martha Jungwirth's work have recently taken place at Kunstmuseum Ravensburg, Ravensburg, Germany (2018), the Albertina Museum, Vienna, Austria (2018) and the Kunsthalle Krems, Donau, Austria (2014). In 2019 the artist was commissioned by the Vienna State Opera to design 'The Iron Curtain' that separates the stage and auditorium for their 2019/20 season. She will take part in the upcoming exhibition "Richard Gerstl Inspiration - Vermächtnis" at Kunsthaus Zug (January 2021). She has participated in a two-person exhibition with Albert Oehlen at Galerie Mezzanin, Geneva (2017), and has been included in group exhibitions at MuMOK, Vienna, Austria (2016); Kunst der Gegenwart, Klosterneuburg/Wien, Austria (2016); Rupertinum, Salzburg, Austria (2015); and Essl Museum, Klosterneuburg, Austria (2014) and documenta 6 (1977). The artist's work is currently the subject of a solo exhibition at the Liaunig Museum, Neuhaus, Austria. Modern Art's Martha Jungwirth is represented in various European and American private collections, amongst them the Rubell Family Collection, Miami, USA; the Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, USA; the Albertina, Vienna, Austria; Mumok, Vienna, Austria; Lentos, Linz, Austria; Joanneum, Graz, Austria.

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