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Katrin Plavčak
Peinture naïve

Opening: 29 May 2021, 11:00-18:00

Exhibition: 29.05.–10.07.2021

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After her solo exhibition “Man With a Woman’s Head” in 2017, Galerie Mezzanin is pleased to announce Katrin Plavčak’s return to Geneva.

With a humorous nonchalance, yet never losing the seriousness of its content, Plavčak’s works denounce existing conventions in painting and present us with a frightening visual review of the past months: The dragging, physically isolating and in so many ways debilitating Covid-19 pandemic (“Il tentativo del abbraccio”); the recent escalation around the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh (“Berg Karabach”); torn down monuments connected to slavery and colonialism (“Pushing on / Leopold II”) and the murder of George Floyd whose perpetrator was just found guilty on all three charges end of last April (“Cuz, it’s so sad, bro / Darnella Frazier, 17”).

“Painting is a method to think about certain topics for me. I guess it’s all about charging a work, during the painting process, with content and form. I try to understand something, and while painting it, I can get very close to the subject matter. I guess it’s also a way for me to digest politics.”¹

In doing so, she simultaneously embarks on an almost ontological search for the value of unambiguity in art managing to build a bridge between - what at first sight might seem janus faced - highly complex political events and “peinture naïve”. The latter often being ridiculed as too close to craft and traditional folk art. This ambiguity however is exactly the forte of the works: not properly mixed and too bright colors, improbable perspectives and a simultaneity of events that is depicted like on a map - unbiased, direct and without censorship.

“This is the big power which lies within art; the ability to show us things in a different light and to make us realize new possibilities.”²

Hannah Höch, Marianne von Werefkin, Picasso and many other avant-garde artists have been inspired by the art of Henri Rousseau and the naïves. The example of autodidactic artists like Ivan Rabuzin, the Georgian peasant Niko Pirosmiani and Grandma Moses however shows that relevant art not only evolves inside institutions but also exteriorly to academia.

For this exhibition Katrin Plavčak paints a technicolor, polyrhythmic universe reflecting the helter skelter ride of almost grotesquely cartoonist contemporary sociopolitical developments, *“and without becoming cynical she finds poignant symbolisations for prevalent fears, traumas, aggressions, for malice, helplessness or repression, but also for empathy and political commitment, to specific agendas or individuals.”³*

¹ Email dialogue between artist Katrin Plavčak and Dr. Egle Rindzeviciute (Kingston University), <https://www.stanleypickergallery.org/programme/upcoming-katrin-plavcak/>

² Chantal Mouffe “For a Left Populism” (Edition Suhrkamp, 2018).

³ Silvia Eibmayr, from On the Mirror of Twilight, Katrin Plavčak, pub. Snoeck 2017

Katrin Plavčák has shown at many international galleries and institutions including: the Secession Vienna; Kunsthalle Wien; Deutsche Bank Kunsthalle, Berlin; Kunsthalle Basel and recently finished a 55 meter long wall painting for Nye Jordal Amfi, Oslo. From 2012-14 she formed part of the feminist artist group ff and, together with Caro Bittermann and Claudia Zweifel, runs the website The History of Painted Revisited; a growing archive of female painters from art history. Plavčák performs with M.O.G, a sewing machine improvistation duo with Swedish artist Ulrika Segerberg, and founded the band Chicken in 2018 with Nicholas Hoffman (vocals, bass) and Hari Ganglberger (drums), Katrin Plavčák (vocals, guitar).

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