

# NATASZA NIEDZIÓŁKA

## *Letter to You*

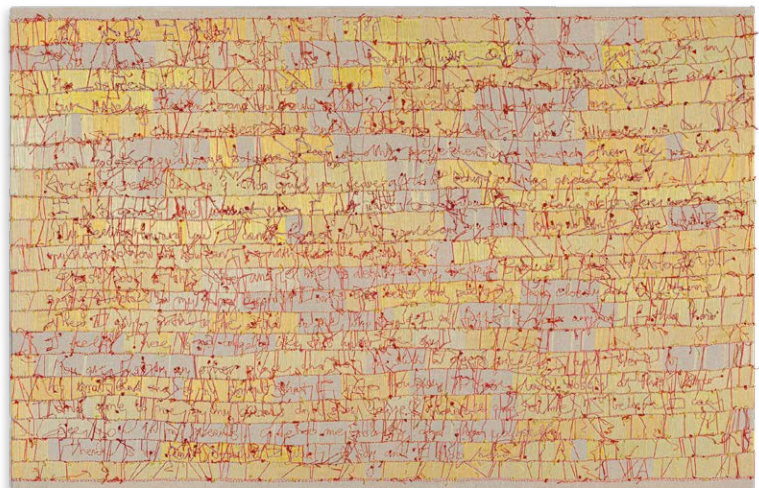


Love Note. You always said., 2022 (detail)

"If you go away as I know you must. There'll be nothing left in the world to trust. Just an empty room full of empty space": These lyrics are from the classic melancholic song "If you go away" by Jacques Brel, which Shirley Bassey covered with haunting intensity and subtle strength.

*If you go away* is also the title of one of the five works Natasza Niedziółka has selected for her presentation in the Kabinett section of Art Basel. Textual, musical, and geographical references form the starting point for works that oscillate between painting, drawing, and textile art and transform the canvas into a picture support for her abstract stitching. Niedziółka has carefully planned all of the pieces, which belong to different series, according to their format, color, thread, and stitching technique, ensuring that they suit each other.

*You always said* is the central work in the presentation. Together with *If you go away*, it belongs to Niedziółka's *Love Notes* series. According to Vanessa Joan Müller, these works are about "writing, calligraphy, and perhaps also the deep



Love Note. You always said., 2022



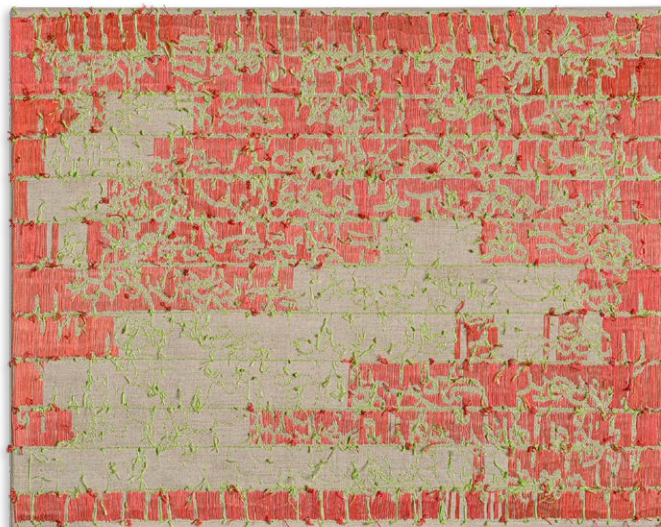
emotion of love, which can be found somewhere on the margins or between the lines [...] potentially reminding us of how illegible the handwriting of some people can be, or of abstract pictographic signs that no longer follow a lexical code, but rather present the essence of writing in a pure form. [...] More of an abstract syllabic form of writing than a fictional alphabet, they transcribe what is not palpable and not nameable into a sensuous texture of thread and canvas."

Whereas the small work *If you go away* picks up bits and pieces of language – a couple of sentences heard in passing from the song of the same name – and renders these in coral and green colored thread, in *You always said*, Niedziółka has translated an entire written work onto the canvas for the first time. In this historic document from Korea from 1586, which has inspired the name of the presentation *Letter to You*, a young widow expresses her deep emotions to her recently deceased husband in a farewell letter that was buried with him.

Against the yellow hues of the thread and the grey of the canvas, she weaves calligraphic passages of the letter with hand-written characters in warm red tones. We are tempted to try to decipher these, to follow them. Years, letters of the alphabet, and fragments of words may be visible, yet they defy legibility, revealing pieces of a story that cannot be grasped in its entirety.

Around these two works, Niedziółka groups two other works that are from her *Zero* series along with the large individual work *Dorsoduro*, which is named after a neighborhood in Venice. The image of this city, which has been written about countless times and is characterized by many different associations and clichés, is juxtaposed with Niedziółka's own impressions and memories of moments experienced there.

If the Kabinett at Art Basel is an "empty room full of empty space," then Niedziółka fills this space by creating a small cosmos through works that are powerful and strong and tell of vulnerability, honesty, insecurity, and – most of all – universal beauty.



Love Note. If you go away, 2021-2022



Dorsoduro, 2021-2022

NATASZA NIEDZIÓŁKA, born 1978 in Międzychód (Poland), lives and works in Berlin.

She studied painting with Tal R at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf.

In 2020 Niedziółka received a grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation and she was an artist in residence at the Gyeongju Art Centre in South Korea in 2018.

EXHIBITIONS (selection): Gyeongju Museum of Modern Art, Gyeongju, South Korea; Schwarz Contemporary, Berlin, Germany; Farbvision, Berlin, Germany; Horton Gallery, New York City, New York; Villa de Bank, Enschede, The Netherlands; Kunstverein Reutlingen, Germany; Kunstverein Ettlingen, Germany; Kunstverein Hornum, Sylt, Germany; and Loop-Raum für aktuelle Kunst, Berlin, Germany.

Photos: Roman Maerz