

GALERIE MITTERRAND

KATJA SCHENKER
PUSH THE SKY AWAY
16 MAR > 6 MAI 2023
PRESS release

Galerie Mitterrand is pleased to present a new solo exhibition in Paris by artist Katja Schenker entitled *Push the Sky Away*, from 16 March to 6 May 2023.

Schenker has just spent six months as an artist-in-residence in London as the recipient of a studio grant from Swiss foundation Landis & Gyr. During this time, she created a series of oil drawings to be presented to the public for the first time at Galerie Mitterrand.

Katja Schenker is a Swiss artist whose work is focused on performance. Drawings and sculpture, as well as photography and video, also compose her repertoire; she uses these media to flesh out the successive stages of her creative process. Her body is the pivotal point around which all her work revolves. It resonates with the surrounding space to question existential notions such as the relationship between our inner and outer selves, the Self and others, and permeability and belonging.

The drawings featured in the exhibition explore the dialectic between our bodies' ability to contain an imaginary inner space and the necessity of being surrounded, held, and reassured by the presence of physical or cosmic entities. Her works reflect the material traces of this tension, accentuated by the permeability of skin, which is sensitive to what occurs both inside and outside the body.

The *body prints* at the entrance to the exhibition are made using the artist's body, painted with gouache and then pressed against paper. We see her two fists and forearms. In the large-scale drawings she made in London, the artist plays with the prints and the lines that she draws liberally around her body with an oil pastel or her paint-covered hand.

79 RUE DU TEMPLE
75003 PARIS
-
T +33 1 43 26 12 05
INFO@GALERIEMITTERRAND.COM
WWW.GALERIEMITTERRAND.COM

GALERIE MITTERRAND

The unique way in which Katja Schenker is able to modify our perception of space in *Push the Sky Away* was already evident in her video performance *Satka*, filmed in 2019 in a magnesite mine in the Ural Mountains. The background is a landscape sculpted by excavating machines, subjected to a constant process of transformation by humans.

The tenuousness and instability of this arid, devastated region is reflected in the atmosphere the artist creates in her performance. Filmed using a GoPro camera, the image is in continuous motion. The horizon sways. Schenker spins around and seems to be unaffected by gravitational forces. The only fixed point is the knot in the thin white cord the artist uses to make the camera spin around her body. This performance is an analysis of the body and its physical possibilities: how long will Katja Schenker be able to keep spinning?

Katja Schenker was born in St Gallen, Switzerland, in 1968; she lives and works in Zurich. Her work has been featured in various exhibitions including a solo show at Jinji Lake Art Museum in Suzhou, China, and a group show *Now Is the Time* at the Wuzhen (China) International Contemporary Art Exhibition. In 2019, the artist presented *Satka* at the 5th Ural Industrial Biennale of Contemporary Art; in 2022, she participated in the *Take Care: Art and Medicine* exhibition at Kunsthaus in Zurich. Recently, the artist was invited to be an artist-in-residence at the Swiss Institute in Rome, followed by a second residency in London. Ms Schenker has won numerous awards including the Swiss Art Award (for three consecutive years), the Swiss Performance Art Award, and, in 2021, the St Gallen Cultural Foundation's Recognition Prize.