



Dusk at Dawn, 2022 - 2023. Oil on linen; diptych. Each panel: 200 × 200 × 5.5 cm, overall: 200 × 400 × 5.5 cm. Photo: Evan Bedford. Courtesy of the artist, Nicodim Gallery, and Perrotin.

KATHERINA OLSCHBAUR

MIDNIGHT SPILL

March 19 — April 22, 2023

Perrotin is pleased to announce its collaboration with Katherina Olschbaur on her first solo presentation in Asia. *Midnight Spill*, her exhibition of latest work, will be held at the gallery's Hong Kong space to coincide with the tenth edition of Art Basel Hong Kong.

The Austrian-born artist lived in Vienna for 16 years before relocating to Los Angeles in 2017. The move to LA, coupled with residencies at Red Gate in Beijing, China and Kehinde Wiley's Black Rock in Dakar, Senegal, profoundly transformed Olschbaur's painting practice, emboldening her to push the boundaries in exploring the tenuous relationship between representation and abstraction, creating the distinct viewpoint in her work which she is recognized.

The following text was written by Lily Luqi Wang and translated by Athena Zhang.

When moonlight refracts off hexagonal ice crystals in cirrus clouds, a pair of elusive, bright spots will appear in the inky sky at the same altitude as the moon, followed by an iris-colored arc of light. Dubbed 'moon dogs', this lunar spectacle is a rare sight in atmospheric optics.

Katherina Olschbaur has created a dramatic moon-dog show at Perrotin Hong Kong with a set of portraits in the style of Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor. Produced over the past year, the series invokes tenderness, coldness, affection, and silent commiseration, the different movements on the canvas reflecting changes in rhythm, emotion, and light. Olschbaur gazed at the mirage of her own projection in the dark night, like the moon cloaked by folds of clouds. In the gulf between subject and object, glints of light appeared.

凱瑟琳娜·奧爾施鮑爾

流夜

2023年3月19日至4月22日

貝浩登欣然宣布與洛杉磯藝術家凱瑟琳娜·奧爾施鮑爾 (Katherina Olschbaur) 合作推出其在亞洲的首次個展“流夜”，呈現藝術家的最新繪畫創作。展覽將和第十屆香港巴塞爾藝術展同期於貝浩登香港空間揭幕。

奧爾施鮑爾出生於奧地利並在六年前搬至洛杉磯，她大膽地推動了表現與抽象之間的脆弱邊界，在繪畫實踐中創造了獨特的觀點，因此而備受認可。以下文字由王璐琦撰寫。

當月光經由雲層中的六角形冰晶兩番折射後，月球同一高度的夜幕中會拋出兩個神秘的光點，一並環出一道鳶尾色的光弧。這一現象在大氣光學中極為罕見，人們將它命名為“幻月”。

凱瑟琳娜·奧爾施鮑爾以《升C小調第十四鋼琴奏鳴曲》式的肖像組畫及聯幅創作在貝浩登(香港)的白盒子內奏響了一場戲劇性的幻月。柔情、冷淡、愛慕與哀憐在這一成形於疫情期間的系列中安靜地回燃。如同被雲層裹挾的月球，奧爾施鮑爾透過黑夜凝視著自身投射的幻像。在主體與客體的深淵之間，群光絮語。

儘管奧爾施鮑爾的部分肖像以現實為依托——或援引朋友倚靠在工作室沙發時的情境 (*Asuka*, 2022-2023)，或以藝術家自身的畫像為題 (*If you want to keep knowing me, you can telephone me now and then*, 2022-2023)，又或參照了洛可可裝飾與70至80年代變裝皇后的服裝史 (*Purple Gaze*, 2022-2023)，畫中人卻總持著一種難以觸



Afternoon Spill, 2022 - 2023. Oil on linen. 155 x 142.5 x 5 cm. Photo: Evan Bedford. Courtesy of the artist, Nicodim Gallery, and Perrotin.

Although some of Olschbaur's portraits are based in reality — a friend leaning on a sofa in the studio (*Asuka*, 2022-2023), a re-examination of the artist's self-portrait (*If you want to keep knowing me, you can telephone me now and then*, 2022-2023), Rococo ornamentation and the history of drag costume in the 1970s and 1980s (*Purple Gaze*, 2022-2023) — the figures she portrays often seem distant and unreachable. Their faces resemble those of religious authorities or Greek statues: they either look directly at the viewer or refuse to interact, their eyes cast downwards. Graceful and detached, they seem to stare at us anyway, regardless of our own gazes.

This otherworldly quality is a result of Olschbaur's use of light. The artist masks the vibrancy of red, yellow, blue, and purple with a neon-like coolness, akin to the stained-glass magic of a church dispersing and muting natural light; the dazzling glare is infused with a cooler shade, pouring down on the viewers' upturned faces, turning their complexions into a subtle interplay of light and shadow. For Olschbaur, each color is imbued with a complicated 'personality', the result of a myriad of lived episodes, because what has been remembered are "memories of the color and the feelings instead of a specific face or place". Olschbaur says, "every color creates a certain space that embraces me, feelings I cannot name, very different and complicated mood[s]."^[1] Thus, when extreme darkness is juxtaposed with extreme brightness, when "one (color) talks to another"^[2], the artist generalizes and sublimates both 'ambiance' and 'mood' using a concise visual language.

Since 2006, Olschbaur has gone on a journey from chaos to figuration and, ultimately, to abstraction (turning concrete figures and shapes into abstract forms.) She has now arrived at a destination where her works have defined a point of clarity. Intricate gradients ensure a kind of visual profundity, and familiar contexts become casually recognizable. Instead of rigid cuts and edits from archetypes in historic paintings, all of the figures are strongly grounded in images retrieved from the subconscious. It is therefore hard to trace the actual origin of a given figure, transforming the work into an 'Olschbaurian resonance' bearing the marks of Maria



Blue Lady Lady, 2022 - 2023. Oil on linen. 170 x 150 x 5 cm. Photo: Evan Bedford. Courtesy of the artist, Nicodim Gallery, and Perrotin.

及的距離感，他們面含著宗教神使或希臘雕像特有的情態，優雅而超然地凝望著來自各方的投射，無論其是否直視著觀看者的雙眼，亦或垂著眼簾並未與畫外人形成目光接觸。

這一遠世的氣質多歸因於奧爾施鮑爾照亮他們的方式。原該具有爆破效果的紅、黃、藍、紫被藝術家賦予了一種霓虹燈式的冷感，或者說，這些色彩更近似教堂的彩繪玻璃對自然光線的沉融，明亮的強光被蒙上一層降了溫的暗調，大片被冷卻後的色塊掉落在抬頭仰望的訪客臉上，人的神情隨即就變得忽明忽暗又不可捉摸了起來。對奧爾施鮑爾來說，每種色彩所擁有的是複雜的“人格”，由無數與之相關的生活片段組成，因為“記憶不是具體的某一個事件、某一個人，而是當時的光線，我能夠記得的顏色”，而“每種顏色都創造了一個擁抱我的空間，充斥著多樣、複雜且難以言喻的心緒。”^[1] 由此，在極暗排比極亮、“一個(色塊)與另一個(色彩)的對話”^[2]中，藝術家通過一種簡潔的視覺語言完成了對“氛圍”與“心緒”的高度概括。

自2006年起，奧爾施鮑爾行完了一段“混沌-化形-抽象”的路程，其作品至今已然具備了較為清晰的樣貌。面熟的本本常在不經意間側身，所有人像基本脫離了對繪畫史中人物原型的剪接，而是更賴於對潛意識圖像的調動與抽取，化作了具有瑪麗亞·拉斯尼格 (Maria Lassnig)、羅納德·布魯克斯·基塔赫 (R.B. Kitaj) 及米麗亞姆·卡恩 (Miriam Cahn) 特徵的“奧爾施鮑爾式混響”。無數個“小時間” (*small time*)^[3] 被鑲嵌於畫面中，迴盪著令人親切的日常細節。巨型畫布上一小處不起眼的灰色紋理錄下了雨天的街道，人像背後的湖面晨曦則借著不同色系的橫紋緩緩蘇醒。淺淡卻觸人的自然震動就在奧爾施鮑爾對生活的拾遺中顯影，“現在從我的窗外看出去，夕陽就落在積雪的山上。這讓我又想回去畫畫了。”^[4]



Bildnis Hannah, 2022 - 2023. Oil on linen. 61 × 51 × 4 cm. Photo: Evan Bedford. Courtesy of the artist, Nicodim Gallery, and Perrotin.

Lassnig, R. B. Kitaj, and Miriam Cahn. Countless “small times”³ are inserted into the painting, reminding us of those sweet, cozy moments we all have experienced. A rainy street is captured by a tiny, unremarkable gray finish on the giant canvas, while the morning glory over the lake behind the characters comes to life against horizontal, colored stripes. Tremors of nature — mild, flat, and impressive — manifest themselves in the slices of life Olschbaur collects. “Looking out of my window now, the sun is setting right on the snow-capped mountain, making me want to go back to painting again.”⁴

Although the shadow of the pandemic can be implicitly felt in Olschbaur’s latest works, the theme of ‘wrestling’ found in her previous series still remains. It does not address a specific subject matter, but rather points to ‘taboos’ and ‘transgressions’¹⁵ per se.

Although the artist borrows from myth and religion, her works of the past two years are not devoted to any specific character or account. Growing up in Austria, a predominantly Catholic country, the daughter of a Protestant priest, the artist went from carelessly and mischievously breaking the rules, to intentionally shaking the established authority and order, to gradually redirecting her focus towards the macroscopic themes of religious and social history. Her rebellious experiments occurred both on the canvas and in real life. Her bold forms, bizarre colors, and sharp lines cut through the taboo-filled secular world and the absolute authority that prevails in it; violence to suppress violent desires, legitimized disciplinary measures, a man’s whip raised to forge divine realms crushed by animal-like spiritual sensuality; the reborn and the dead constantly reappear in discussions of religion, femininity, and mythology; exploding debates about control, discourse, physical punishment, and spiritual freedom. Art, religion, history, and selfhood are disrupted by a primitive force (like Jacob’s) until the simultaneous arrival of God’s blessing and punishment.

When night falls, the prelude to a drama unfolds, veiling ‘transgressions’. The element of night, as Olschbaur observes, is a constant presence in



If you want to keep knowing me, you can telephone me now and then, 2022 - 2023. Oil on linen. 61 × 51 × 4 cm. Photo: Evan Bedford. Courtesy of the artist, Nicodim Gallery, and Perrotin.

即便藝術家的最新創作多少暗含著疫情過後的傷疤特徵，這些繪畫依舊延續了其過往系列中“互搏”（wrestling）的內核。它並不明確針對某個具體的議題，而是指向“禁忌”與“僭越”^[5]本身。

過去兩年，藝術家雖借殼了神話故事與宗教片段，但其創作本質上絕不是為了服務某個具體的人物或章節。生於奧地利，一個以天主教為主流教派的國家，奧爾施鮑爾在父親——一位“嬉皮士神父”的影響下進入新教語境。在成長過程中，藝術家從頑皮地、無意識地觸犯教規，到有意地撬動既定的權威與框架，一步步將目光投向了更為宏大的宗教史與社會史，在生活與架上的雙重畫布上開始了叛逆的實踐。充滿禁忌的世俗世界和僭越一切的絕對權威被誇張的形體、反常的色彩以及鋒刃的線型割裂；為壓制暴慾而產生的新暴力、被正當化的規訓手段、為擬造神的領域而揚起的人的戒鞭被動物式的靈慾所碾踏；重生的與死亡的不斷在宗教、女性以及神話的命題中起身；有關控制權、話語權、肉體規訓與精神自由的討論暴烈生長。由此，藝術、宗教、歷史與自我不斷被“雅各式”的原生力量衝破，直至神的祝福與懲罰一並降臨。

由是，夜幕成為一切戲劇登場的前奏，為“僭越”籠上一層面紗。奧爾施鮑爾對夜晚的關注持續迴盪在她2020年至今的創作中，“到了晚上，一切邊界都被模糊了，人們看起來更親近了，憂慮似乎變少了。”^[6] 儘管這批新作相較於21年的“暗夜祝福”（*Night Blessings*）多了幾分溫柔，它們卻仍延續了藝術家一以貫之的美學起點：威尼斯畫派的光影闡釋以及希臘神話的悲劇色彩。奧爾施鮑爾布上的夜是丁托列托式的，它背離清透透明的世界與甜美純淨的和平，將目光調向了黑暗，通過朦朧的視幻點燃了“火焰的力量、閃電的光芒，以及盔甲和矛槍尖上閃爍的光”^[7]。

her works from 2020 to the present: "At night, the boundaries are blurred, people seem closer, worries seem less, (and) moments shared with people are healing."⁶ Compared with recent work dating to 2021, these newly created works are somewhat gentler, but they still exhibit the artist's aesthetic roots in the light of the classic Venetian School and the tragic overtones of Greek mythology. The night in Olschbaur's work is reminiscent of Tintoretto. Instead of a clear and bright world and a "sweet and pearly peace", it seeks darkness, its hazy visions igniting "the strength of flame and coruscation of lightning and flash of sunshine on armor and on points of spears."⁷

Fundamentally, this visualized 'light' against the backdrop of night is the artist's visual externalization of 'speed'. We know that it takes 1.255 seconds for light to travel from the moon to the earth, so all moonlight we see is 1.255 seconds old. The speed of light is too fast for our perception to adjust, so what is usually captured is the residual luminosity, which echoes Olschbaur's description of her work as having a quality of being "so fast it becomes still".⁸ The images are patches of condensed light. In his book *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality*, Bataille refers to individual "discontinuity": "between one being and another, there is a gulf, a discontinuity".⁹ To bridge this discontinuity, Olschbaur expertly uses 'light' as a visual expression for 'speed', neutralizing the border with darkness to reinforce the presence of light. Yet instead of crossing the gulf all at once to reach the figure in the painting, the viewer is included in a shared history between the creator and the created, reliving the transformation. In transgression, people hesitate, before breaking the ice and starting to explore.

Great nothingness and darkness envelop the world. In the paintings' flow of faces and brush strokes, fierce struggles and gasps of exhaustion reverberate amidst the city's hustle and bustle. Under a moon-dog night, Olschbaur has created magic on her canvas, the moon gazing wordlessly through the gulf at her own refracted self-image. "At last! the tyranny of the human face has disappeared, and I shall no longer suffer but through myself."¹⁰

而這種以夜幕為底的、可視化的“光”就本質而言，是藝術家對“速度”的一種視覺外化。人們已知，光從月球抵達地球的速度為1.255秒，人類在地球上所見的月光實則都是1.255秒前的光線。由於光速過快，人對光的感知並不是在一秒內就突生變化的，因此我們通常捕捉到的是速度留下的明度殘留，而這也指向了奧爾施鮑爾對其創作的一個關鍵形容“（它們因速度）快到靜止。”^[8] 巴塔耶曾在《情色》一書中提到個體的不連貫性 (discontinuite)，即“一個個體存在與另一個個體存在之間有一道深淵”^[9]。奧爾施鮑爾則巧妙地以可視的“光”作為“速度”的視覺表達，以暗夜中和邊界，並強化光的存在，去彌合這種不連貫性。由是，觀看者並非在倏忽之間跨過深淵抵達畫中之人，而是在變奏的過程中共享一段創作者與被創作人的共同歷史。在僭越之中，人們怯步、破冰、徘徊。

在人臉及筆觸的流轉中，挾著城市噪聲的激烈搏鬥與力竭後的喘息交錯回響。奧爾施鮑爾在布上孕育出了幻月夜下的黑色泥土，月球穿過深淵靜謐地在天幕中凝視著折光中的鏡像。“人臉的暴政終於消失了，我只因我自己而痛苦了。”^[10]

1. Video interview with the artist on January 31, 2023.
2. Ibid.
3. Wu Hung, *Leopard Trail: Related to Memory* (Shanghai Joint Publishing House, 2022): 89.
4. Video interview with the artist on January 31, 2023.
5. Georges Bataille, *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality* (City Lights Books, 1986): 36.
6. Video interview with the artist on January 31, 2023.
7. John Ruskin, *Lectures on Art* (George Allen, London and Orpington, 1891): 273.
8. Video interview with the artist on January 31, 2023.
9. Georges Bataille. *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality* (City Lights Books, 1986): 12.
10. Charles Baudelaire, translated by Gene Greene. *At One O'clock in the Morning*.

- [1] 2023年1月31日與凱瑟琳娜·奧爾施鮑爾的視頻訪談
- [2] 同上。
- [3] [美]巫鴻. 豹跡: 與記憶有關[M]. 上海: 上海三聯書店, 2022.6: 89
- [4] 2023年1月31日與凱瑟琳娜·奧爾施鮑爾的視頻訪談
- [5] [法]喬治·巴塔耶. 張璐譯. 情色[M]. 南京: 南京大學出版社, 2019.2: 47
- [6] 2023年1月31日與凱瑟琳娜·奧爾施鮑爾的視頻訪談
- [7] [英]約翰·羅斯金. 李正子, 劉迪譯. 羅斯金論繪畫[M]. 北京: 金城出版社, 2018.12: 40
- [8] 2023年1月31日與凱瑟琳娜·奧爾施鮑爾的視頻訪談
- [9] [法]喬治·巴塔耶. 張璐譯. 情色[M]. 南京: 南京大學出版社, 2019.2: 10
- [10] [法]夏爾·波德萊爾. 郭宏安譯. 在凌晨一點鐘. 巴黎的憂鬱[M]. 北京: 商務印書館, 2018: 24

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