

ZILLA LEUTENEGGER

Rien de lourd (Nothing too heavy)

July 13 – September 21, 2024

Opening: Friday, July 12,

Finissage: Friday, Sept. 20, 6 - 8pm

Rue des Arquebusiers, Paris

The gallery will be closed from July 30 to August 26.

Galerie Peter Kilchmann is pleased to announce *Rien de lourd*, a new solo exhibition by Swiss artist Zilla Leutenegger (*1968 in Zurich; lives and works in Zurich and Soazza) - and her first exhibition in our gallery in Paris. Zilla is one of the artists who has established video as an artistic medium in Switzerland in the 1990's and she has made a name for herself internationally especially through the poetic finesse of her video works. Zilla has taken this year's Summer Olympics in the French capital as an opportunity to create new works that playfully explore the theme of sport and in particular, movement in space. The artist explores discipline and exhaustion with familiar ease and creates contrasting images. Eleven monotypes, in which the drawn female figure takes centre stage, two video installations and ceramic works can be seen in the gallery in the rue des Arquebusiers.

Rien de lourd is also the title of a new video installation on view in the gallery: the shadow of a female boxer passionately hugs a punching bag – an encounter. Three punching bags made out of aluminum hang from the ceiling; their surfaces have been prepared and patinated to resemble the black leather of their originals. The result is an interplay, an interaction between the video projection and various shadows projected onto the gallery walls. Depending on the viewer's position, the installation reveals different faces and thus unfolds its magic. In order to take a short breath, boxers grab their opponent during a fight and literally hug them. However, it is not a gentle, loving hug, but an abrupt and violent one, a wrestle from which the opponents resume their duel. A further installation on display in the gallery window also deals with boxing: *Heavy Bag* from 2010. The alter-ego of the artist is depicted fighting against a wall drawing of a punching bag in motion.

At the centre of *Rien de Lourd* are eleven new monotypes that go back to the artist's first video works such as *Der Spagat (The Split)* from 1996. Zilla has graphically translated these works to paper. They are inspired by the bright, colourful graphic posters by Andy Warhol and David Hockney, in which the motifs are completely free of shadows. The female figure is the main protagonist as so often in Zilla's work - and is depicted in various athletic positions creating playful movement studies. These monotypes show 'pretend-to-be characters', as an adaptation of something that one is not, comparable to Zilla as a gorilla in the video installation *ZillaGorilla (2021)* or Zilla as a ballerina. The monotypes in the exhibition are accompanied by wall drawings: these show enlargements of the motifs on display, complementing them as a connecting element. They are painted on the wall with black colour using a fast, dynamic and rhythmic brushstroke: striking and large, as the Olympics.

In *Don't look back in anger, 2024 (108 x 75 cm)*, a female figure wearing blue trousers and a black top is depicted on a light orange background, bending her upper body down so that she can see through her split legs. In *Endless Pool, 2024 (108 x 75 cm)*, the protagonist swims into the turquoise-blue background wearing a magenta-coloured swimming cap and a leaf-green swim suit (the artist herself is a swimmer). A figure in a variation of the yoga pose 'Scorpion' is depicted in the monotype *Skorpion (Scorpion), 2024 (108 x 75 cm)*. The depicted pose is one of the most extreme poses in Yoga, which can only be achieved through extensive training and perseverance. Its colour palette ranges from fiery red, to a bright pink with an orange undertone, over to a strong rich pink into a light pink. The aim of this pose is to achieve perfection, just as top athletes do. In addition to *Skorpion (Scorpion)*, Leutenegger has created almost artificial positions that most people cannot perform, including the works *Voila, Tumbling* and *Tumbling naked* (all: 2024, 108 x 75 cm). The poses and activities depicted in these works can be considered a discipline in themselves; the body reaching its limits – an association to the hardship endured by athletes in the Olympic Games. On the contrary to the acrobatic figures, the artist has created anti-poses that show resting, crouched female figures. This approach is also reflected in *Let it be, Mouse, I'm not around,*

Whatever makes you happy and *Odds* (all: 2024, 108 x 75 cm). In *Let it be*, for example, the female figure lies on the floor, pulled her legs together clasping them with her arms. The work was inspired by a photograph from the 90's that shows the artist in this precisely pose.

The exhibition is completed by two different groups of ceramic works. Individual, black-painted and glazed ceramic dumbbells, each with a different weight, bear the title *Poids (Weights)*, 2024. They are attached to the wall with brackets and can or must be held in the hand in order to feel their weight and haptics. The artist plays with the fragility of the material and the robust appearance of the dumbbells. The ceramic installation *L'Etagère (Rack)* contains barbells and dumbbells that are presented on a rack and encourage the public to test their weight. Every day, people move through different spaces, organise their lives in them, engage with themselves, train and get fit. Visitors thus automatically become part of the exhibition by moving through the gallery space, engaging with what is on display, projecting themselves into the works, testing the dumbbells, for example, thus transferring the presentation to a self-questioning and performative level.

Zilla's works have been exhibited internationally since 1996. As part of the Lucerne Festival 2024, which opens this August, the artist has been invited to present a project at the KKL. Past solo exhibitions have been presented at the Museum zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen (2022); Bündner Kunstmuseum, Chur (2021); Musée Jenisch, Vevey (2016); Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2015); Centro de Arte Caja Burgos CAB, Burgos, Spain (2014) and Museum Franz Gertsch, Burgdorf, (2014) among others. The most important group exhibitions include (selection): 'Born Digital' at Kunsthaus Zurich, "Singular: Monotype and Counterproof" at Kunstmuseum Basel (2023); International Drawing Biennial, National Gallery of Kosovo, Pristina (2022); Drawing Biennial, Drawing Room, London (2021); "Fly me to the Moon", Kunsthaus Zurich and Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, Austria (2019); "The World on Paper", Palais Populaire of Deutsche Bank, Berlin (2018); "Interval in Space", Osage Art Foundation, Hong Kong (2017) and Sydney Biennale (2014). Works by the artist can be found in numerous collections, such as the Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau; Bündner Kunstmuseum, Chur; Centro Gallego de Arte Contemporáneo, Santiago de Compostela, Spain; Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos, Burgos, Spain; Kunsthaus, Zurich; Kunstmuseum Basel, Museion Museo d'arte moderna e contemporanea, Bolzano, Italy; Museum Kunstpalast, Dusseldorf, Germany; Museum zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen, Switzerland and the collection Goetz, Munich, Germany to name but a few. In 2021, a documentary film about the artist entitled 'ZILLA' by Iwan Schuhmacher was released. From 2014 to 2021, Zilla was a lecturer at the architecture department of ETH Zurich. She taught as a guest lecturer at Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) from 2022 to 2023. In autumn 2022, she was awarded the title 'Honorary Companion ZHdK'.

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