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## *Yesterday's Echoes*

**Bianca Brunner**

**24th March – 6th May 2017**

**Preview 23rd March, 6 - 8 pm**

*A happening. Or: how can anything still happen?*

You can almost still hear the loud bang. Looking into the gallery from the outside you see a lot of empty space. An object on the floor. A circular ribbon has burst open. One half of the ribbon is still a circle, the round remnant of a whole, which shattered due to great tension, and twisted. The whole thing still seems to be vibrating from this force. The bang is still present in the air, which seems to be trembling. Yesterday's Echo.

The circle opens directly behind the gallery door and pulls you inside. On the right you see a photograph on the wall. A surface with many scratches and cracks, cut diagonally by a white rift. It is the overhead shot of an Engadin lake frozen to black ice, something that happens when it is chillingly cold briefly before it snows. And just as quickly the black lake is gone. You have to dare to step out on the ice to catch this enthralling view into the black depth. It opens up in front of you, captivating and at the same time eerily attractive. But then it creaks and crunches consistently underneath the surface. You can never be sure whether it will break. This image is also an echo: of the burst ribbon on the floor. In this case there has not yet been a loud bang, but you can never know, whether it will have happened soon.

Behind the next wall – and surely not by coincidence not immediately visible on its reverse side – they are there again, the signs of the times past. The veins and small grooves, which one of these wild rivers of the Ticino has drawn and dug into its rocks since eternity, evoke the bulges and indentations of naked skin, and attraction and lust. It comes as no surprise that names and maybe words of love have been written and carved into them, barely visible. Despite the almost harmonious beauty there is immense tension in the surface. It is streaked by fractures and tears, by the traces of tectonics filled with immense impact.

Altogether the rooms of the gallery have been sparsely filled by the artist. You could almost say that the works have been scattered about. As beautiful and multi-layered as they are in their colourfulness, in their shape, in their aesthetic, they are also charged with an explosive power as revealed by the object in the first space. It does not just show a rupture, it is a bang.

Bianca Brunner's works do not only have explosive power. They jump at you. From behind, the back, the past. *Yesterday's Echoes*. Whereby these echoes do not seem to correspond to the one commonly known, which – like Narcissus- confirms us, returns almost identically to us what we gave from us. Instead they are echoes, which rattle us, pull the rug out from under us. They are sudden, like a bolt out of the blue, from nowhere. *Yesterday's Echoes* are future perfect, they will have been. They are not here yet, and then a smack, which is and in the same moment already has been. *Yesterday's Echoes* are instants. They are presence.

It is no coincidence that the exhibited objects have not been placed on plinths. The key factor is not their representation, but their presence, their immediacy. Hence they are placed directly on the floor. But when they hang on the wall as customary and display their beauty, the ones on the floor point

out with their presence, their whiplash, that these photographs are not purely about the representation of beauty, but if nothing else about the breaks and slumps of moments, that catch up with us, jar us, and become a thing of the past immediately.

The ,veils' mentioned repeatedly are shells around something that receives a seductive allure because of them. The negligee that slides over skin and reveals it, is eroticism, is beauty, and captures one's imagination. Just like the green veil in front of the window in the last room of the exhibition (*Veil (green)*, 2017) – a plastic bag like the ones you get in supermarkets – stimulates one's phantasy of what else there might be to come with its enchantingly beautiful, almost constructive surface. At the same time the veil with the line that crosses through it, with the cut that curls up, and breaks through the smooth and beautiful surface, has its break, its other face.

These cuts, which exist in every work, are also wounds. For the shell is also the skin, like in the naked veil (*Veil (nude)*, 2017), which is placed directly next to the already erotic shapes of the rock in the water. Here the shell is this waxy paper, in which the butcher wraps the meat. It is the skin on this bloody meat. It is the skin, which has scratches, wounds that are bleeding.

The shell is beauty, seduction and magic, which are impressively visible in every object, in every image. It is always also the suspense, the surface tension, the visual surface tension that threatens to burst. You can see it in all the works, you can literally hear it.

On the floor of the final room lies a slab of concrete, which on first sight appears weighty and massive, heavy and solid, just like the floor itself, the foundation on which we stand and walk. But this slab, this massive thing, is hollowed out. You can almost not see it. Here too it quasi creeps up on you that underneath it is an emptiness, a space, a buckling nonentity, which makes it very thin in its centre. So thin that it could break and collapse. Maybe the cracks are already showing, maybe not. We do not know, we can only sense that they will come, that it will happen. And that then it will have happened. Like at the start on that floor where it already happened with a loud bang. And so at the end of this exhibition we arrive back where we were before it. Yesterday's Echoes are always already here, or have not been yet. They are always in-between, just like the hollow space underneath the slab. And they are an instant, they are presence. They are maybe more immediate than that, which always is.

In 1968 Bruce Nauman made a work entitled *Tape recorder with a tape loop of a scream wrapped in a plastic bag and cast into the center of a block of concrete*. On first sight you could see a cube made of concrete. A cable came out of it – or led into it – and connected it to an electric socket. A cable, which led to a tape recorder wrapped in a plastic bag and poured into concrete, on which a person screaming was played back in a continuous loop – which could not be heard.

Here – in Bianca Brunner's works – we hear the scream, even when it is always already over and always about to happen. Yesterday's Echoes is – one could argue – an installation. It makes the emptiness of the space – and also of the gallery, the white cube – tremble and vibrate. You can hear the bang of the happening. And in this sense the installation is a happening that is at one with Derrida, that one is not aware of, that one has not experienced yet, that one does not know and cannot predict.

*Olaf Knellessen*

Bianca Brunner was born 1974 in Chur, Switzerland. She holds an MA in Photography from the Royal Collage of Art in London and a BA in Photography from the London College of Communication.

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