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Press release

13.06.–15.08.2021

Alexandra Tretter

DIE MODULE SPIELEN VERRÜCKT



Alexandra Tretter, *Regel*, 2021. Courtesy the Artist and 14a, Photography: Volker Renner

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In her first institutional solo exhibition “Die Module spielen verrückt” (The modules are acting crazy), Alexandra Tretter presents a new series of large-scale works created specifically for the IKOB exhibition spaces. Her works are painted from and of the body, without representing it directly. Rather, her compositions explore the constant transformations and shifting boundaries of the body and mind, like kaleidoscopes of anatomical cross-sections, or psychedelic Rorschach tests. The symmetry inherent to her paintings imbues them with a sense of duality and opposition: each ‘module’ holds its own energy of form, colour and texture.

Tretter’s works are painted in acrylic on unstretched linen and pinned to the wall, as pointed out by artist and writer Julia Dubsky, “they can be rolled up like a traveller’s possessions, a condition of agility”. The four works shown in “Die Module spielen verrückt” each occupy their own holistic plane, the artist’s visual language of repeating shapes and colours enveloping the viewer. One of them, *Regelrecht in anderen Umständen* (2021), has been cut out along its oval edges, the background formed by a deep blue circular composition, as if emerging from the wall itself. Rather than treating her paintings as fixed objects in space, Tretter has a fluid understanding of her imagery, allowing it to be endlessly reconfigured.

The central motif of Tretter's works is the oval, a potent shape that can resemble an egg, a mouth, an eye or a vulva: organs that are defined by their states of openness and closure. In her important essay "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity" (1988), art historian Griselda Pollock shows that the configuration of urban and domestic spaces that female painters in the early 20th century had, or were denied access to, produced a distinct spatial composition in the works themselves. The limitations and possibilities of femininity come to define not just the condition, but the effect. Through her paintings and her practice, Alexandra Tretter opens up a crucial space for expression and freedom: during her childhood in the former GDR and in her previous career, 'holding still' was imperative. As an artist, Tretter lets her forms and colours radiate off the canvas, petals unfolding into a vivacious blossom, acting crazy.

"Die Module spielen verrückt" is accompanied by a limited-edition vinyl record, recorded and designed by the artist. The record acts as a score for the works in the exhibition and an extension of the paintings into the realm of sound. Produced in collaboration with 14a, Hamburg, it is composed of sonic elements that accompany the artist during the painting process, as well as recorded text fragments.

Biography

Alexandra Tretter (b. 1988 in Wolfen, Germany, based in Berlin) holds a BFA from the Academy of Fine Arts in Hamburg with Jutta Koether (2016-20), as well as a degree in architecture from the Berlin Institute of Technology (2011-2015). Her first solo show "Panikblüte" took place at 14a, Hamburg in 2021, and she has exhibited her works at Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof, Hamburg (2020); Kunstraum Bethanien, Berlin (2019); ENSBA, Paris (2019); Uferhallen, Berlin (2019, 2018).

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