

*Sketch for a Fountain*

2017

*Nicole Eisenman*

\* 1965 in Verdun, France

lives in New York, USA

Sculptural ensemble, fountain

Bronze, plaster, basin

Dimensions

Basin ca. 500 × 700 m

Reclining bronze ca. 70 × 165 × 280 cm

Standing bronze ca. 260 × 80 × 120 cm

Seated plaster figure ca. 100 × 120 × 100 cm

Reclining plaster figure ca. 50 × 120 × 320 cm

Reclining plaster figure with water ca. 150 × 110 × 240 cm

Location

Meadow alongside Promenade

Am Kreuztor / Promenade

Temporary installation for the duration of the exhibition

Nicole Eisenman is primarily known for her paintings and drawings. She makes playful use of a palette of styles and visual languages that ranges from Renaissance painting to modern art, combining them with everyday observations and references to pop culture and pornography. Relationships, stereotypes, the body, and sexuality are assigned a key role in her figurative pictures with their underlying sense of melancholy. Since 2012, Eisenman has been increasingly involved with sculpture, a medium she appreciates for its tactile and sensual qualities.

In Münster Eisenman has created a fountain installation with several figures in the middle of the Promenade. The ensemble of five larger-than-life figures, made of bronze or plaster, is casually grouped around a basin. The nude figures of voluminous proportions, which cannot readily be assigned to one gender, take various poses. The relaxed formation is accompanied by narrative moments: in the middle of the water, a self-assured nude extends its body skywards in exhibitionist

fashion, while the other figures chill around the basin, sunbathing or lost in thought as they gaze into the reflections in the pool. Water trickles from three of the figures, as a culture of handmade mushrooms sprouts at the feet of one figure. Similar to Eisenman's colour application in her paintings, the texture of the figures is varied. The entire setting is rounded off with moss-covered stones from Marl.

With her fountain design, the artist has interpreted one of the oldest examples of public art in a new way. In antiquity, fountains served as meeting places for cult rituals. And today monumental fountains with an abundance of figures still give distinction to numerous parks and squares. Eisenman's work responds to those opulent arrangements with a gentle sprinkle, streams of water coming from various body parts, and a placid water surface that—together with the inactivity of the figures—conveys calm. She counters these historical fountain arrangements, which are replete with a wide range of meaningful gestures, with lumpishly sluggish, cartoon-like figures that evoke associations with Paul Cézanne, George Segal, or Tom Otterness and seem indifferent to aesthetic or societal norms.

The scene resembles those of the artist's drawings that bring forth a queer Arcadia. Time seems to stand still; only the can of soda held by a dozing figure alludes to the present. Reduced activity, gentle splashing, and the ground-level arrangement invite visitors to join the protagonists and become part of the setting. Everything stands together as an elementary creation in fluid correlation as Mother Nature, culture, and identities intertwine. Wind and weather cause the group to age slightly over the course of the exhibition.

*Andreas Prinzing*

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