



Lily Wittenburg

*Die Schlafenden, die so liegen,
schmeicheln ihren Verkürzungen*

11. December 2021 – 12. Februar 2022

We are pleased to announce the fourth exhibition of Lily Wittenburg at KM entitled *Die Schlafenden, die so liegen, schmeicheln ihren Verkürzungen* (“The sleepers lying like this flatter their shortenings”).

As in earlier shows, Lily Wittenburg reverses the classical concept of artistic work, in the frame of which the artist usually predetermines how a picture is supposed to look. Wittenburg, in contrast, makes this decision in a dialog with the material—but not without determining certain parameters, for example, the selection of the ground, the format, the frame, or the hanging.

The frieze of identical formats creates a shifting vis-à-vis alluding to the human scale, which both the artist and the viewers are exposed to and make contact with. The monumental stele standing vertically on the floor appears to take up the floor’s variety and coloring, thus charging the entire space with the dialog of the material process. Different colors and substances clash, mix with each other, corrode and repel each other, merge, dissolve, reveal or conceal. The flow velocities vary, at times the liquids freeze, and yet it appears as if they were already indicating their next aggregate state. At the border between controllability and the inherent dynamics of the liquids, including enamels, acids, acrylic paints, chemicals, or glues, Wittenburg attentively watches what happens and intervenes in a minimal way. What connects the surfaces? What does the material require? With the attitude of an amateur who doesn’t want to know how to do it correctly, the artist explores developments and initiates processes she cannot predict. Processes of displacement become visible, seemingly irresolvable tensions mount. The artist does nothing to change this. The confrontation with these states lies solely with the viewers. They too must endure them.

Integrated in the frieze are three drawings. They appear at once focused and restless, letting one sense that there is something behind them. Each line is independent. Velocity directs the voids on the sheet toward a long rhythmical process. Interruptions in the flow of the ink create room for these voids. The drawings are therefore as determined as they are open.

The new pictures stand in a close relationship with text and language, they complement language where there are no words for what is shown. The visitors can put on headphones and listen to a 20-minute audio piece by the artist. The only thing that offers conciliation and balance in these works is the positing of interstices or pauses. Language is an important factor in this process. For the artist, this activity and the material provide a linguistic access. The observation shoots her language to pieces. Something inexpressible is approached. How will things proceed? What takes place in the mind? What is at the fore: the pictures or language?

In a dialog with the material, Wittenburg uses her “tactile instinct, an immersive relationship that complements vision with touch, handling, smell, contemplation, love, and imagination, and as someone who experiences the object as an affective ‘blow’ to the senses.”

Lily Wittenburg published her poems for the first time in 2020 in her artist’s book *Den Kern der Täuschung verfehlen* (“To miss the core of deception”).