

Sour Well

Christiane Blattmann, Henrik Potter, Sharon van Overmeiren
12.03. - 30.04.2022

In the exhibition *Sour Well* the artists Christiane Blattmann, Sharon Van Overmeiren and Henrik Potter present works dealing with the subject of time, using similar approaches and sensitivities. Be it with the past, the here and now, the future or compressed time. We store our lives as memories, always under new visual influences that we must reclassify in their ambiguity, each in our own way. The artists duplicate, reproduce or question our own frozen memories, giving us the space to make our own associations and to indulge in thought.

A physical, an almost human closeness is conveyed by the works of Henrik Potter. They are created in relation to the body of the artist and to the body of the viewer when they are perceived. For this exhibition, the artist has made new large-scale works on site. They divide the exhibition space, occupying the gallery walls and acting as backgrounds to others' works. Their softness stands in contrast with Blattmann's and Van Overmeiren's artistic positions, but at the same time they serve as a mediator between the artists' perspectives. Potter's works, through their translucent and ephemeral surfaces, subordinate themselves as a mere architectural intervention to the other works in the exhibition, yet they appear to us as pieces in their own rights. In their materiality of wooden stretcher frames, stretched bleached muslin with a clay-glue mixture and highly diluted oil paint, they appear delicate and light from a distance. Yet, if we step closer, we see a partly scratchy surface with embroidery and painting. A similar gentle as well as rough touch is inherent in Henrik Potter's paintings. For these he transforms, among other things, others' works of art and brings them back to their own physicality. They are never copies, yet they inevitably carry the original within them. These contrasting impressions are also reflected in his creative process, in which he prepares his works with meticulous care, only to implement them with sometimes complete carelessness, or tenderness, or even care.

Sharon Van Overmeiren's works emerge more out of the spiritual than the physical. She combines seemingly arbitrary, unconscious memories in *Holds in Custody* and *Shades from the sun*, using cultural-historical artifacts and artistic references as her medium. She detaches old images, symbols and found forms from their original context. Using chance as her tool, she reconnects her impressions seemingly without any discernable semantics. She mixes moods and feelings to stimulate us to think about problems and questions of today: How do we perceive images? What kind of values do we have? How does society and consumption influence us in our spirituality? With her works she tries to find answers to all these questions in a optimistic way. In their creation they are already reproductions of the experienced and remembered, so consequently she relies on the concept duplication also in the phase of production. In the exhibition she presents her hybrid sculptures made of natural beeswax in three copies. Her unconscious inspirations are never exactly revealed, and yet in some moments we are not entirely unaware of them. Van Overmeiren's works pick us up on an unconscious level of memory. The artist intentionally withholds a clear interpretation or explanation of the sculptures to allow everyone to make their own associations, which immediately creates a closeness between the viewer and the work.

The closeness between work and observer also plays a major role in Christiane Blattmann's work. With *Watershed #2*, the artist addresses the ambiguity between inner and outer spaces. The wall piece stands symbolically for this and is a continuation of works from the previous exhibition *The Law*. With the motif of the entrance gate, one could think of Franz Kafka's prose text *Vor dem Gesetz* and of questions such as: Does a border run spatially or mentally? Do I want to be inside or outside? Who keeps me from crossing and who lets me through? Blattmann's masonry also brings us, as viewers, into a threshold situation and at the same time invites us, with the help of the charming and haptically interesting materiality of dyed jute and cast silicone, to approach closer. She also takes up the theme of inside and outside in her floor piece *The Sediment, A Sentiment, A Threshold*. The stove as a cold sculpture, that has the potential to be warm, refers at the same time with its anthropomorphic form to a physical body, which in turn introduces warmth. For the joint exhibition *Sour Well*, the three artists Christiane Blattmann, Sharon Van Overmeiren and Henrik Potter worked closely together on the curatorial concept, content, and design.

Text by Rosa Rodeck

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