

"Nothing is left to chance"

Maria Lassnig, Kembra Pfahler, Pipilotti Rist, Joanna Woś
September 29 - November 18, 2022

Public opening:

Thursday - Sunday, 29 September - 2 October 2022,
11 am - 7 pm

The exhibition "Nothing is left to chance" features 4 female artists, who through video, photography, animation and painting emphasises the singular experience of *being a person in a body* in a world within the world. Through their very coherent and persistent visual language we can grasp a sensation of certain – more often personal, but also common – things that *we touch* and things that *touch* us, which form our perception and experience in thoughtful, but also simple, natural way. Each of the artists coined a unique way of bringing out the weirdness of being human in our chaotic reality.

Maria Lassnig was one of the most original painters of the XX century, who throughout her career explored *the body and self-representation*, her paintings are vividly gestural, expressive, influenced by surrealism. She committed her practice to address the matter of the fragility of the body, critical contemplation of the artist's positioning as a woman, the way her body felt in contrast to how it looked. In the exhibition we reach for her 1972' animation video "Couples" with a strong presence of her quirky, humoristic but still delicate, memorable drawings, which create a visual narration alongside the dialogue between *a casanova and his victim*. The artist commented on the work: *The tone is lyrical, the voices are real, the bodies are sketchy: A couple talks at the phone and in bed. <<You helped me, you made me strong, but you can't blame me for anything. When somebody loves so blindly, they pay with their life>>*.

To qualify as if you're an artist, you have to be practically willing to die – is one of the most enduring quotes by Kembra Pfahler – an American artist born in 1961 in California. She is a legendary icon of New York's Underground scene – her practice is as wide-ranging as her productivity throughout the years starting in the 1980s. She works with performance, photography, music, film, and acting. Her visual vocabulary speaks loudly about fetishistic femininity and beauty. In her performances she uses horror-like scenography, humour, vivid sexuality where all the known clichés of the standardized category of feminine are turned into dust. Kembra's work – whether it is unsettling, liberating or inspiring – it never fails to take it to the radical extreme of total freedom.

Pipilotti (Loti) Rist videos, installation regularly combine performance, dance, drawing, painting and sculpture, and they are have one thing in common – explore intimacy to extravagant level. Rist speaks of herself "I was a wild girl" and her works – intensely colorful videos are just the perfect example of her rebellious spirit. Presented in the exhibition is a five-minute single-channel video "I am not a girl who misses much" made when the artist was still a student at School of Design in Basel in 1986. The video depicts the artist in a low cut black dress that she dances manically around the room while repeatedly singing 'I'm not the girl who misses much'. The phrase is an adaptation of the first line of the Beatles song 'Happiness is a Warm Gun', 1968. A song John Lennon wrote for Yoko Ono and as Rist once said: *In my village in Switzerland I had a small window on the art world through the mass media; through John Lennon/Yoko Ono I moved from pop music to contemporary art. In return, I will always be grateful to popular culture*. Rist presents a response to the erotic metaphor of the original song, as seen through the visual language of MTV.

Joanna Woś is unafraid to make people uncomfortable with her paintings – as Krzysztof Kościuczuk wrote: *She Dances the Line Between Permitted and The Taboo*. Woś' practice tests the borders of the disturbing and is driven by unconstrained, and expressive motifs combining autobiographical themes with traces of self-irony, focusing around female and male body, sexuality, with a touch of surrealism and historical symbols. A distinct gradation – from horror to pleasure – is strongly present in Woś' works, which makes the boundaries between existential fear, violence, and human comfort gradually disappearing. Woś continues the narration of leaping into the subconscious to reflect on what was / is repressed, traumatic, perverse by using grotesque, often obscene stylistics. The artist forms a private, introspection-based pieces contemplating a vast, and intricate spectrum of meaning – affect, pleasure, embarrassment that simultaneously frightens, overwhelms but also appease.