

We are pleased to present a selection of charcoal drawings, oil paintings, watercolour paintings and super 8 mm films by the Swiss artist Miriam Cahn in our gallery showrooms in Berlin and Karlsruhe. The retrospectively presented exhibition brings together works from different periods in a time frame ranging from the early eighties until today, which Cahn has arranged corresponding to a specifically developed concept in consideration of the different spatial situations.

While the showrooms in Berlin have the works presented openly, hung closer to one another incrementally, thus becoming a progressive narrative thread, in Karlsruhe three separate rooms are constructed which establish an inner structure for the whole exhibition in both cities through the arrangement of the pictures - horizontal, clustered, and chronological - as well as through the subject matter.

Miriam Cahn's paintings comprise either direct reflections of a situation experienced in real life or an actual condition, furthermore, they are determined by the artist's own cycle, therefore derived from womanhood as such, which is expressed in a gesture of discord and action decoupled from control. Some of Cahn's pieces are inscribed with the abbreviation 'bl. arb.' ('blood work'), explicitly referring to a physical and psychological state, which shows the difference between female and male feeling from an existentialist perspective.

The performative element of Miriam Cahn's work is just as prevalent as her own corporeality and its influence on the formation of her pieces. The body is not only the object of contemplation, but also the medium with which the artist's corporeal images are expressed. The series of works L.I.S. ('Lesen in Staub' - 'Reading in Dust') and M.G.A. ('Mit geschlossenen Augen' - 'With Eyes Shut') emanated from an immediate perception of the material used and from an intuitive impression: As if it were a performance, Cahn grinds a block of chalk to dust, and forms a loose heap of pigments, which she imprints onto paper as a trace (of the soul) - in an act of drawing which involves her whole body - with eyes shut.

Exterior influences, such as war and violence find their reflections in paintings like A- + H-Tests. Watercolours made by throwing water and pigments at the canvas; the translucent color gradients trace the effects of atom and hydrogen bomb tests from a personal point of view, converted into the medium of painting by the artist.

Cahn's artistic mode of practice is also fluid. Usually, a piece emerges within few hours of one day as a process facilitated by absolute concentration (as in: immerse, perform, emerge). The expressive act of painting visualises a very direct impulse from the artist in a surrealist, associative way.

However, precise observation and tracking of her environment is prominent in Miriam Cahn's films, in which she either follows animals with her camera or captures the inherent movement of a landscape (animals, plants, water or weather) as a predefined excerpt lasting three minutes. It is striking in Cahn's scenes that she captures a transient motion sequence as a moment and records glances from the exterior world while counterfacing the viewer by allowing her work to be seen through a private filter. Analogies or similarities between people, animals and plants are retained as figurations, or transfers of intrinsic qualities and are modeled into a corporeal memory, as is the case in Miriam Cahn's oil paintings. The artist shapes what she has seen as a mental image in a medium adequate for the image. This transfers and highlights her own perception of reality.

Miriam Cahn works with painting, drawing, performance, film, photography, and music. She connects these and sets them in correspondence with each other within a given space. By allocating her works into different series she not only creates a private index, dividing the paintings into cycles, but also demarcates direct positions, which - in the whole and especially when they are hung - interact with each other as autonomous bodies of work. Cahn conceived an energetic, dialectical room concept for the works shown in our gallery as a tribute to her Jewish-German father. But the exhibition is not to be seen merely as an autobiographical retrospective. The direct inclusion of themes relevant to today's society - such as the progress of the feminist movement since the seventies, the consequences of the Gulf War, the portrayal of terrorism - make Miriam Cahn's work a testament of socio-political development, voiced directly in her work from a personal point of view and put forward for discussion.

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