

Monika Sprüth and Philomene Magers are delighted to present the first exhibition by Astrid Klein in their Berlin gallery. The title of the exhibition Broken Heart, Works 1980-1995 references a body of work from the year 1980. A selection of works from this series, two sculptures (1990/1995) and works from the series weiße Bilder (white paintings), achieved between 1988 and 1993, will be exhibited.

The painter and sculptor Astrid Klein has been working at integrating text into her paintings for over three decades. In 1972, before she had even started her degree in Cologne (1973-77), she began to write several texts which she later printed onto hand-made paper. The topics of her own texts, as well as her later use of other textual sources, bear witness to her thoughts on literary, aesthetic, philosophical and scientific writings. In a fragmented and concealed way these various sources are incorporated into her Schriftbilder (text paintings) which make up the large majority of the exhibited works in Berlin.

The large format works of the 1980 series Broken Heart use excerpts of text from Arno Schmidt's seminal work Zettels Traum (1970) in relation to the representation of women in cinema and photonovels from the 60s and 70s. The latter were affected by a voyeuristic, masculine perspective along with this the fetishisation of the female form. In the collages, Astrid Klein links textual and pictorial material on a visual level that not necessarily share the same semantic level. This creates a context, in which new meanings are revealed.

The sculptures BROKEN HEART I and BROKEN HEART II (1990/5) contain mirrors that have either been shot at or have been smashed with a hammer. The cracks mean that the reflections of the surroundings can only be viewed as fragmentary or deformed.

With the weiße Bilder (1989-1993), which can be seen as the counterpart to the series schwarze Bilder (black paintings) of the 70s, Astrid Klein approaches the limits of visibility. To make the invisible visible and to show what can't be shown is hinted at in the paradoxical phrase Erinnerungen eines Gedächtnislosen (memoirs of a person who does not remember) featured in one of the works on display. The memories fade in the gradual repetitions of two lines of text, as this is how the almost unrecognisable text line at the bottom left hand corner can be interpreted – nicht bis ins Herz getrieben (they do not penetrate the heart).

Astrid Klein's paintings, collages, works of photography and installations created since 1978 question, deconstruct and renew the relationship between image and text. Since the beginning of the 90s, she continued these intense discussions also in her large format neon sculptures and light

installations. The form and the typeface of the text play as important a role in the works as the content. The overlay, blurring and accentuation can be read as the archeological layers of our thinking and our perception, of memory and oblivion, of what we suppress and what is subconscious.

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