

Jagoda Bednarsky
HOKUS POKUS HYPER FOKUS
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Text by Annika von Taube

Deception is generally understood to be circumstances or sensory perceptions that do not correspond to truth or reality. Seen in this light, most art is nothing but deception. It is not interested in what is "true" or "real"; each work creates its own reality, and each viewer's eye sees its own truth in it, characterised by everything it has seen before and from which angle it is looking. Visual worlds, role models, self-image, all factors that condition the reading of images, and if you are lucky, they miraculously merge into a new realisation, like a successful alchemical experiment - and that brings us to the art of Jagoda Bednarsky.

Bednarsky's painting is sometimes described as unearthly, dreamlike, fantastic, which is not least due to her preference for soft pastel colours and may also apply to the works in this exhibition, but one should not be lulled by this, but rather pay attention to the exhibition title, as the etymological origin of "HOKUS POKUS" lies in the guild of tricksters and their tricks, who, incidentally, were still classified as "merry arts" in the Middle Ages and only acquired their reputation as swindlers and petty criminals in the course of modern times. Although Bednarsky's pictures are not guilty of any trickery or attempted fraud, they utilise the same mechanisms of perception manipulation that are common in trickery and magic tricks (and indispensable for their success). In essence, the aim is always to draw attention to a detail that takes on the utmost importance at the moment of observation (which brings us to the "HYPER FOCUS" in the exhibition title), even though it only serves to distract from the actual event. Does that make it unimportant? On the contrary, it is of fundamental importance for the success of the trick, and proof that the most important and the essential are often not one and the same thing.

As far as Bednarsky's subjects are concerned, the order and weighting of the details observed has an enormous influence on the effect of the picture as a whole. Why is it that I only recognise what it is when I look at it for the third time? And what am I suddenly seeing here that wasn't there before? The outstretched frog's hand, which seems to dominate the picture until you recognise the body that goes with it and thus another layer of the picture; the blurred garland, which turns out to be lettering, or more precisely, the artist's name, although she always signs the back of her canvases; the blossoms of a wreath of flowers, outlined like colouring book templates, on which

the gaze initially lingers until it sinks all the deeper into the shimmering infinity that surrounds it like a gateway to another world.

The curtains, which separate here part of the gallery space in such a way that a room within a room is created, are also part of the game with perception. Those who follow their promising invitation will find themselves in "Shadowland", the title of an ongoing series of works that revolves around female breasts. Sometimes they pile up to form a hilly landscape, sometimes they float in perfect curves like soap bubbles through delicate air, sweetly alluring and desirable in their beauty and yet too far removed to arouse sexual desire, a playful, loving homage to femininity - this series is inspired by the ruthless reality of motherhood, a literal self-reflection of the artist in her role as a mother. The rather unusual sideways perspective of the breast originates from the mother's point of view looking down at herself while breastfeeding her baby. The frontal view of the breast, which is far more common in the history of painting, is only taken by a woman when she looks at herself naked in a mirror, and thus from an external perspective. Here behind the curtain, however, the gaze begins with an interior perspective and, laden with all the aforementioned influences on the reading of pictures, makes its way back to the outside.

Standing in front of the picture and being in the picture at the same time, recognising oneself and the other at the same moment, seeing inside and outside as one - what seems impossible according to the laws of logic comes naturally to Jagoda Bednarsky. There's just a bit of hocus-pocus involved...