

JANA EULER

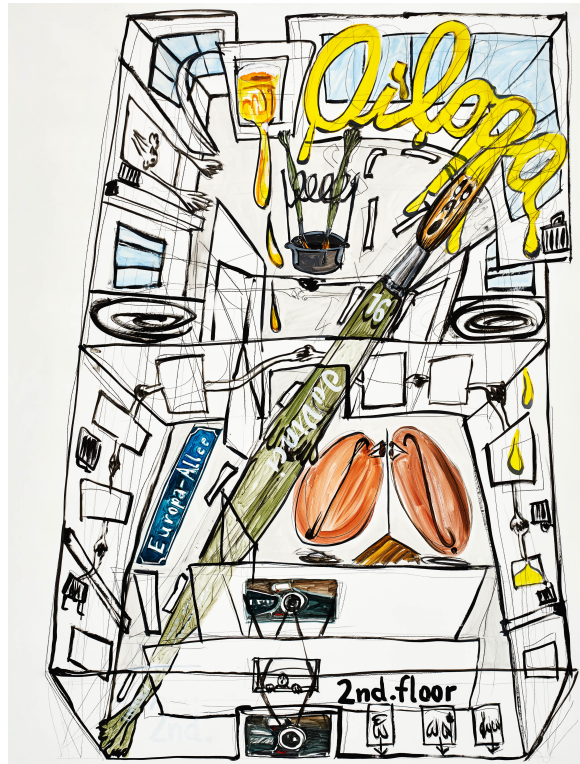
Oilopa

21.06 - 29.09.2024

WIELS, Brussels

Over the two last decades, German artist Jana Euler (b. 1982, Friedberg) has produced a diverse though consistent body of work that diagrams painting's social, material, and historical bases. Euler draws international attention to her uninhibited, way of pictorial invention, appropriation and rehabilitation. This monographic exhibition during summer 2024 is also a renewed invitation from WIELS to the artist in their ongoing relationship, following Euler's earlier involvement on various occasions – such as the residency programme in 2012, the thematic exhibition *Residue* in 2013, or her context-specific contribution for *The Absent Museum* in 2017.

Entitled *Oilopa*, a contraction of the terms Oil (painting) and Europa, Jana Euler's exhibition unfolds into a semi-utopian land, reversing the ascendant flows of financial statistics while extrapolating on cycles of surplus production, excess, recess and vacuity. By assuming a heterogeneity of textures, techniques and pictorial heritages, Euler pursues her approach of vitalist expressive figuration as a device giving shape to fantasied worlds. Yet, as in *Oilopa*, these fantasies are less engaging in an escapist reflex from the real as opening up perspectives on its perverted processes. Moreover, the heterogeneous nature in Euler pictorial execution with striking differences in brushstrokes can also be seen as a way of performing a plurality of personalities, as painters in drag. However, these variations do not seek to satisfy any "stylistic" issues *per se*. They rather respond to Euler's wish to identify the appropriate rendition for every subject treated. Euler thus calls on painting's functional adaptability. Therefore, her critical gaze is characterized by a sometimes seductive, sometimes distasteful, powerful sense of the situation, pointing the vulnerability of postures and protuberances as well as their paradoxical attractivity. Yet, the excessive feature of Euler's painting, which often takes on the latent, sometimes pathetic affects in present times, remains resistant to moralistic perspectives.



The exhibition, set on WIELS' second floor, is crossed by spatial element, a diagonal cutting through all the temporary walls and fixed walls. Entitled "Oilopa Allee", it functions as a vanishing point named after the Europa Allee, an existing boulevard that makes the connection between the European headquarters in Brussels and the European Central Bank in Frankfurt, the two cities between which the artist divides her time. Bordering on this diagonal are organized groups of older and recent works – many of which have been specially produced for the occasion – including many large-scale paintings and several medium formats, as well as sculptures, documentation and exhibition furniture. These elements are articulated according to sightlines which casts new light on the various characters and iconographies which the artist has investigated over the last decade. Chimerical animals, such as the "morecorn" (an inflated version of the unicorn), rub shoulders with phallic sharks and dolphins, as well as with anthropomorphic products and tools, such as male spray paint cans and female paint brushes. As is often the case in Euler iconography, many of these subjects express a state of mind, joy, or anxiety, communicating an awareness of their own performative visual apparatus.

The exhibition also presents older and new variations from the series *When the energy comes from* initiated a decade ago. Among them, new samples refer to the energizing coffee economy as a multifocal symptom of extraction, dependence, productivity, hedonism and leisure. Browsing through Frankfurt and Brussels also inspired Euler to pinpoint a phenomenon of urban planning theorized as "cappuccino urbanism", characterized by the uniformization of passive pleasure and yuppie lifestyles while, in the backlight, actively insulating from social realities.

On view, appealing textured details of individual coffee beans extended to a monumental scale turn them into portraits of a sexualized territory. From the same series, the exhibition also showcases an earlier painting of (female) socket, through which the artist blurs the prevailing polarity between a passive/female and an active/male by considering the active verb "socketing".

What connects the works and objects depicted in *Oilopa*, is the idea of energy. From oil painting's tricks to communicate, to become vibrant, alive, as a territory of desire and projections, to the many locations of energy's circulation and its subsequent conversions. The exhibition space itself functions as the set of a mental journey in which thoughts can erupt as embodied scenarios.

Curators: Pauline Hatzigeorgiou

With the generous support of:

Cabinet Gallery
dépendance
Galerie Neu
Greene Naftali

Artist Biography

Jana Euler (b. 1982, Friedberg, Germany) lives and works in Frankfurt and Brussels. Institutional solo exhibitions include; Artists Space, New York (2020); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2017); Portikus, Frankfurt (2015), and Kunsthalle Zürich and Bonner Kunstverein (2015/14).

Significant group shows include the 59th Venice Biennale, *The Milk of Dreams* (2022); Museum Brandhorst (2023); Kunstmuseum Basel (2022); KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2021); Fondazione Prada, Milan (2021); Manifesta 13, Marseille, France (2020); Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2019); Tai Kwun, Hong Kong (2019); mumok, Vienna (2018); WIELS, Brussels (2017, 2013); Nassauischer Kunstverein, Wiesbaden, Germany (2013); and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2013), among others.

Her work is in the collections of Museum Brandhorst, Munich; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Tate Modern, London; and The Warehouse, Dallas.

Jana Euler is represented by and has shown significant gallery exhibitions at dépendance, Brussels; Greene Naftali, New York; Galerie Neu, Berlin; and Cabinet gallery, London.

Events

Public opening: Thursday 20 June 2024, 19:30

Nocturnes with guided tours (NL/FR/EN)

Every 1st Wednesday of the month, 11:00-21:00

Family Funday (FR/NL)

Every first and third Sunday of the month, a WIELS guide takes children and their parents through the exhibitions together. For children between 2 and 12 years old.

More events & registrations: WIELS.ORG

Practical information for press

Press conference: Thursday 20.06.2024 between 14:00-16:00 (or on appointment via fran@wiels.org)

Open from Tuesday to Sunday from 11:00 to 18:00

Nocturne: Open every first Wednesday of the month until 21:00

Press contact for interview and image requests:

Fran Bombeke, Fran@wiels.org, +32 (0) 494 907 166

Press images + credits:

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WIELS

As one of the leading institutions for contemporary art in Europe WIELS presents temporary exhibitions by national and international artists, both emerging and more established. WIELS is a site of creation and dialogue, in which art and architecture form the basis for a discussion about current events and issues, not only through its exhibitions, but also through an international artist-in-residency, an education and community-oriented programme and complementary activities.

Avenue Van Volxemlaan 354
B-1190 Brussels
www.wiels.org