

The Arts Club of Chicago is pleased to announce *Kerstin Brätsch: PELE'S CURSE*, the New York City-based German painter's first solo institutional exhibition in the United States. Coming to prominence in the United States after her inclusion in the New Museum's first Generational Triennial *Younger Than Jesus* in 2009, Brätsch (b. 1969) established her identity as both a solo artist and as a member of various collective efforts, principally DAS INSTITUT with Adele Röder (2007-present) and KAYA with Debo Eilers (2010-present).

At The Arts Club, Brätsch brings together a trio of investigations that begin with the premise of painting and attempt to break it open through visual, linguistic, and methodological associations. Working with skilled artisans from Europe, Brätsch has made paintings that are not paintings anymore, or paintings in forms we do not initially recognize—paper marbling, baked antique glass and sliced agate, and stained glass “brushstrokes.” With Dirk Lange (a master marbler from Germany), she has devised a technique that allows traditional paper marbling to succeed on a grand scale. These monumental works play on the connections between the technique of marbling, done by dropping ink into a basin of carageenan, and the radical rotation of the painting canvas to the horizontal plane by Jackson Pollock in the 1940s. Brätsch, however, allows the orbs and constellations in the resulting pigment formations to accrue meanings and visual associations in a manner anathematic to mid-century abstraction. Her paintings are purposefully associative and occult—drawing to mind Hawaiian volcano goddesses, Japanese anime, and esoteric dinosaurs.

Brätsch transitions from paper to glass through a play on words that, like Duchamp's maladroitness puns between English and French, often rely on her translations of thought from German to English. She has explained that she mistakenly referred to the marblings as marbles, but now has used that confusion to understand how a tiny glass ball is, like the marbling ink, also a “drop” of color. More profound, however, is the recognition that glass and painting each begin with light and shadow. Rather than explore those fundamentals in their pure state, as the twentieth-century abstract painters tried to do, Brätsch embraces infiltrations of outside meaning. Formed through intense heat, glass, lava, and agate become surrogates of painting's contaminated stroke.

The Arts Club exhibition furthers Brätsch's non-purist position through collaboration. She has engaged Chicago-based artist Gaylen Gerber, whose practice consists in curating the work of others into spaces and situations of his invention, to design the exhibition. Textile works that draw on Brätsch's marbling patterns by Mariechen Danz will also be featured. The exhibition catalogue also highlights past collaborations between Brätsch and fellow artists.

Born in Hamburg, Germany, Kerstin Brätsch studied with Lothar Baumgarten at the University of

Arts in Berlin, and received her MFA in 2007 from Columbia University School of the Arts, New York. Select exhibitions include Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; Museum of Modern Art, New York, Fridericianum, Kassel (as KAYA), KUB Kunsthaus Bregenz (as KAYA), Kunstverein Arnsberg, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne (with DAS INSTITUT), Kunsthalle Zurich, Zurich (with Adele Röder), The 54th Venice Biennial, Venice (as DAS INSTITUT), MoMA/ PS1, New York (with DAS INSTITUT and UNITED BROTHERS), Gwangju Biennial, Gwangju, Sculpture Center, New York (as DAS INSTITUT), New Museum, New York (with DAS INSTITUT), Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (as DAS INSTITUT). She lives and works in New York.

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