

Maria Lassnig counts as one of the most important artists of the present and has set new standards for generations of artists in both her subject-matter and her radical presentation of it, in drawing and painting as well as film and video. The artist achieved international recognition through her participation in the 1980 Venice Biennale, the documenta 1982 and the documenta 1997. Large-scale solo exhibitions of her work were mounted most recently at the Serpentine Gallery in London in 2008, the MUMOK Vienna in 2009, the Lenbachhaus, Munich in 2010 and the Museum Ludwig in Cologne in 2011. Maria Lassnig was born in Kappel in Krappfeld (Austria) in 1919 and today lives and works in Vienna and Carinthia.

Since the 1940s Maria Lassnig has dealt, through painting and drawing, almost exclusively with the visualization of internal sensations of the body, a theme she terms “Body Awareness-Drawings and -Paintings”. Through this approach she has created a lifetime’s body of work which takes as its starting point a recognition of the human body’s potential as a medium for generating images.

In 1980, after residing for many years in Paris and New York, the artist returned to Vienna, where she was appointed to a post at the Academy of Art, becoming the first female Professor of painting in a German-speaking country.

Capitain Petzel shows ten paintings, most of which were created in the last three years. All canvases come directly from Maria Lassnig’s atelier and are presented in public for the first time.

In these new large-format works Maria Lassnig investigates themes including gender-roles, with figurative elements presented against monochromatic backgrounds in a colour-palette characteristic of the artist’s work. The spectrum of motifs ranges from a double-portrait (“Adam und Eva“, 2010) and the presentation of a couple in the act of love, an amorphous green creature seeming to float above them (“Die Inspiration“, 2010), to a half-portrait of a young man who literally reveals his innermost, insofar as he opens up his chest with his own hands (“Der Jüngling“, 2011).

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