

JACKY STRENZ

ALEXANDRA TRETTER

Kindergarten

September 6 – November 4, 2024

In her first solo exhibition with the gallery, Alexandra Tretter continues her series of cut-outs which she started in 2021. While these were previously painted on primed canvas and pinned directly to the wall, the artist has now chosen a new medium and format for the works. She now focuses her medium-sized and large formats on the classic intimacy of the portrait, while the mirror-like character of her work is further accentuated by the aluminum plates on which her paintings are now based.

The range, which the artist always focuses on thematically, reveals the symbolic power of the rainbow in this exhibition, with each individual picture manifesting one of its seven colors.

There are several reasons for choosing this color scale. The rainbow as the “child” of the contradictions of sun and rain is the connection between heaven and earth. Its colors, it is said, unite the different aspects of life: “red” symbolizes life itself, “orange” healing, “yellow” the sun, “green” nature, “light blue” communication, “indigo” clarity and “violet” its all-embracing soul.

According to Friedrich Fröbel, the child's soul expresses itself through play, which is not trivial but highly important and of the deepest significance. Fröbel (1782-1852) is regarded as the father of the kindergarten. He was ridiculed for his ideas and his institution was banned within a very short time. The degrading connotation of the term “kindergarten” in numerous contemporary contexts indicates that this negative assessment is still popular. Why is that?

The artist avoids giving a clear answer to this question. Instead, she expands the horizon of this question to include a further aspect of historical short-sightedness in the area of gardening.

The titles of the exhibited works (corn poppy, marigold, celandine, nettle, speedwell, cornflower and ground ivy) name native medicinal herbs with a centuries-old tradition, most of which are relegated to the modern botanical consensus as troublesome weeds.

However, the inner essence of these plants is still a deep-rooted healing power that reveals itself if one is mindful and looks closely, beyond convention or current labeling.

It is the same with the child, who according to Fröbel should be tended and grown like a plant in a colorful garden. The child, as well as the plant, provides the orientation and speed of its growth, and there can be neither

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right nor wrong. These are just fragmentary assessments of the adult companions. Because everything that thrives under the care of sun and rain is fine. The rainbow appears once again. The rainbow group of paintings quotes the name of Tretter's son's kindergarten; here, again, the symbol is an everyday certainty.

The pictures, like herbs and children, are a growing expression of an inner essence that will always remain suggestive. We owe their perception to their expression in lines, surface and color qualities. Tretter takes this path one step further with the paintings in her exhibition "Kindergarten". The central essence of all her previous paintings, an oval hybrid of egg, vulva, mouth and eye, maintains the tension of this development, which symbolically focuses on the healing power of our inner child.

Bernhard Michaelis

Alexandra Tretter (* 1988 in Wolfen). Lives and works in Berlin

2017 – 2020 BFA Painting/Drawing, HFBK Hamburg, with Jutta Koether.

2020 School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA.

2011 – 2015 B.Sc. Architecture, Technical University Berlin, Germany, with Donatella Fioretti

Solo exhibitions (Auswahl): antiGone, Kunstverein Heppenheim, Heppenheim, DE (2024); Bienenstich, CATHY, Furth im Wald, DE; safe and sound (with Ulrich Wulff), Faecher, Berlin, DE (2022); Die Module spielen verrückt, IKOB, Museum of Contemporary Art, Eupen, BE; Panikblüten, 14a Gallery, Hamburg, DE (2021).

Group exhibitions (Auswahl): EAT THE RAINBOW – Collection exhibition, IKOB - Museum of Contemporary Art, Eupen, BE; daß die Göttin nicht himmelwärts, sondern herab nach ihren Freunden blickt, Secci Gallery, Florence, IT (2024); die Welt ist noch auf einen Abend mein, Ehrhardt Flórez Gallery, Madrid, ES (2023); Schatz ich kann nicht ich bin im Dienst, Dienst (LADØNS Gallery), Hamburg (2022); Constellations in a Bubble, Kirchgasse Gallery, Steckborn, CH (2021); SeeUth3re -Dialoge zwischen Fenstern (with Laura Mahnke), Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof, Hamburg, DE (2020); They put it together, Kunstraum Bethanien, Berlin, DE; Ne Désespère Pas, Aie Confiance, ENSBA, Paris, FR; Ufer Open 2019, Uferhallen, Berlin, DE (2019); Ufer Open 2018, Uferhallen, Berlin, DE (2018).

Scholarships: The Art School Alliance, School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA (2020); École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, Travel Grand, Paris, FR (2019).