

Four woodcuts from Andrea Büttner's St. Francis Cycle serve as the focal point of her solo exhibition at the gallery. The subtly colored prints devoted to the life and legends of St. Francis of Assisi constitute an important series within her oeuvre. The cycle features motifs such as the birds St. Francis preached to, the stones that, according to legend, he begged for instead of bread, and the tears that blinded him. Together the woodcuts Breadpebble, Drinking Man, Tears, and Bush occupy a special position within the cycle; all four feature motifs from nature.

The organic, brown form in Breadpebble (2010) provides ample room for the viewer's imagination. The shape of the object may remind one of a potato, a stone, or even feces. This, like other forms seen in Büttner's work, invites multiple interpretations, transcending the actual object depicted. This ambivalence of meaning proves to be one of the artist's essential principles of expression.

The woodcuts are presented on a wall painted brown. Here, too, the material nature of the paint lends itself to ambivalent interpretation: repulsion and beauty are closely related and continually alternating. Büttner's large scale intervention in the white cube, with its accepted conventions of perception, functions as both a mural and a background, lending an even more impressive aesthetic presence to the woodcuts, while deconstructing notions of neutrality and purity.

Benches and the room corners take on special significance in the exhibition design. In many of the spaces that Büttner creates benches with woven backs invite visitors to sit down and alter their perspective in a moment of contemplation. At the same time, the benches can be considered as sculptural objects. Here in Munich, the colored bench backs are separated from the seats and displayed as if they were standalone paintings. Another reference to painting is made by two stretcher frames covered in fabric, which are installed perpendicular to each other in a corner of the room. The material—simple fabric like that used for work uniforms—may also be a reference to St. Francis. Having forsworn all worldly goods, he exchanged his valuable robes for the simple cloth of a monk's habit.

The exhibition also features the artist's new reverse glass paintings. Reverse glass painting and woodcuts have a long tradition in Bavarian art, and these techniques were revived in the early twentieth century by Gabriele Münter and Wassily Kandinsky. At the Barbara Gross Galerie in Munich—so close to the Lenbachhaus with its important Blaue Reiter collection—Andrea Büttner's work takes on a special resonance.

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