



## MUSEUM IM BELLPARK

A forum dedicated for art, photography and history

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# ONE MILLION BEARS TINA BRAEGGER

19. January to 30. March 2025

Opening: Saturday, 18. January 2025, 17 Uhr, Museum im Bellpark, Kriens

**Museum im Bellpark is hosting painter Tina Braegger's first solo exhibition in Switzerland following international exhibition successes. Since 2011, the artist has been exploring the tension between the authentic original and the (appropriated) replica through using the motif of the "Marching Bear". Braegger constantly paints new phenotypical variants of the bear in oil on large (and a few small) canvases. Within the framework of the chosen self-restriction to one motif, she cultivates a fearless, maximal expansion, which appears popular and pleasing in its playful colorfulness, but quite provocatively questions the distinction of "high culture" and "popular culture".**

The motif of the "Marching Bear" goes back to the artist Bob Thomas, who designed the official logo of the psychedelic rock band "Grateful Dead". In the 1970s, he copied the drawing of a "marching bear" from an unknown artist and placed a circle of little multi-coloured Marching Bears on the back of the 1973 record "History of The Grateful Dead, vol. I (Bear's Choice)". The bear was supposed to reference sound engineer and LSD pioneer Owsley Stanley, alias "Bear", who produced the record. The Marching Bear was subsequently adapted by the Grateful Dead's fan base, the so-called „Deadheads“, as an unofficial band logo and endlessly replicated on bootleg merchandise such as stickers, t-shirts, posters etc.

Through this collective process of intellectual and creative appropriation, the bear has been freed of a fixed purpose or identity in a way, having absorbed the characteristics bestowed upon it during its decades-long tour of circulation and canonization, much like a sponge. Braegger exhibits and demonstrates this dispersion further, imagining many forms and identities for the bear to assume. In combination with a football it appears playful, some bears' strides on the other hand appear militant, as if they are walking in step with their comrades. The bears' typical open grin sometimes appears childlike and light-hearted, in other paintings it tips over into an unsettling, possibly psychedelic-induced agitation.

With her realizations in painting and adaptations in various media, Tina Braegger inscribes herself into this mass phenomenon as an artist – a painter nonetheless – therefore linking the perception of "low culture" and "high culture". Since 2011 she has the bear appear in prints, paintings, as illuminated sculptures, in illustrated ribbons and on hand-sewn polyester flags. Further she has published two novels on the series of works, and is currently working on a catalog with illustrations of the more than 200 bear-related paintings as well as a volume of poetry. Dealing with originality, reproduction, authenticity, repetition and stylization, her practice can be located within the tradition of Appropriation Art, as practiced following the 1970s by Elaine Sturtevant and others.

In the exhibition "One Million Bears" at Museum im Bellpark, new works created for the exhibition are combined with selected earlier works of the series. For the first time, over thirty of Braegger's Bears are gathered in one place, joint for the "revue" in the museum's exhibition rooms.

### Bio Tina Braegger

Tina Braegger, born in Lucerne in 1985, is a contemporary Swiss artist. She studied at the University of Art and Design Zurich from 2005 to 2010 and graduated in Fine Arts from the ECAL in Lausanne in 2015. Tina Braegger lives and works in Basel since 2010 and is represented by the galleries Weiss Falk (Basel, Zurich), Société (Berlin) and Meredith Rosen Gallery (New York). Her works are regularly presented in national and international exhibitions. Recent exhibitions include Curiosity Killed the Cat, a two-person exhibition curated by Udo Kittelmann with Sturtevant at De 11 Lijnen in Belgium (2021) and a solo exhibition at Neuer Essener Kunstverein (2022). Braegger was represented in two groundbreaking group exhibitions of contemporary painting with "Lose Enden" (Kunsthalle Bern 2021) and "Paint by Numbers" (Galerie Eva Presenhuber 2022). Despite this increasing importance, her work has so far been underrepresented in the museum context in Switzerland. Following an initial collaboration with the artist as part of the group exhibition "After Bob Ross. Beauty Is Everywhere" (2021), the Museum im Bellpark is now hosting her first institutional solo exhibition in Switzerland, presenting Braegger's work in a representative show.

### Public programming

Saturday, January 18, 2025, from 5 pm, Museum im Bellpark Kriens

#### **OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION**

Welcoming remarks by Kathrin Graber, President of the Museum Association

Short artist talk between curator Hilar Stadler and artist Tina Braegger

Drink and Food

Sunday, February 16, 2025, 2.30 pm, Museum im Bellpark Kriens

#### **ARTIST TALK**

Joint discussion and tour of the exhibition alongside artist Tina Braegger and curator Hilar Stadler

Sunday, March 30, 2025, from 2.30 pm, Museum im Bellpark Kriens

#### **FINISSAGE INCL. BOOKVERNISSAGE**

Last opportunity to take another look at the exhibition

Vernissage of new publication in the presence of the artist

Apéro

### Press images

Press images for web and print as well as the digital press release are available for download at [www.bellpark.ch/presse](http://www.bellpark.ch/presse) from the beginning of January 2025. You do not need a password.

### Press contact

For further questions or inquiries, please contact:

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