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Karla Black

Opening: 13.03.2025, 18:00-21:00

Exhibition: 14.03. – 11.05.2025

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We are pleased to announce the first solo exhibition of the Scottish artist Karla Black at Galerie Mezzanin.

Karla Black herself proposed to share a few lines with us about her new and very personal works. We are thrilled and honoured to present her insights, which offer a unique and intimate perspective on the creative process behind this body of work :

“I had a nasty piece of land that brought in nothing but wheat; I sold it and in return I got this beautiful mirror. Did I not work wonders - some wheat for this beautiful mirror?”

At the end of the 17th century, the Countess de Fiesque paid an exorbitant price to own a rare glass mirror. For me, it is around this time, that the self-consciousness, created by the mirror, begins to erode direct material experience and fully absorbent 'being' in the physical world, towards the extreme point of removal by Smart Phone we find ourselves at today, via portraiture, photography, moving image and autobiographical language. The mirror - “matrix of the symbolic” - began that process.

In *The Mirror: A History*, Sabine Melchior-Bonnet says: “It would be wrong to speak of a pre-mirror and a post-mirror schism.” Since prehistoric times, reflection is utilised. The glass mirror was still a leap. Melchior-Bonnet and Ian Mortimer, in his book *Millenium*, talk about the glass mirror as pivotal in shifting Western culture to individualism and breaking a contemplation between communal groups of humans and their relationship with God. When they speak of God in this regard, I like to think instead about nature, the material, the physical, the world and/or universe. Bonnet: “Men [sic] of the 18th century... did not look at themselves... as men of the 12th century, for whom the reflected image went hand in hand with the devil. More profoundly, the representation of the self depended on a complex idea of humankind, at one time both being and appearing. This sense was elaborated at the same time as relations of the soul to the body developed and as the individual became defined according to his ties to God, to others and to himself.” Mortimer says that seeing one's self in a mirror turned humanity from a collective to an individual relationship with God.

I smear paint over glass mirrors to break the spell of the stopped, shocked self-consciousness that keeps me from my direct relationship of absorption in the material world. But these Smart Phones, with their reflection-projection media, are so much harder to break than a mirror. I hate this new spell.

Karla Black

Karla Black's abstract and immersive sculptures are created through her experimentation with unconventional materials. These monumental works investigate the link between materiality and texture, as well as the emotions they transmit. Her interplay of delicate abstract forms, pastel colors and surprising materials demands a physical experience, material experiences being Black's preferred way to understand the world and communicate within it. For her, materiality is closely tied to psychological states of being.

Karla Black's numerous solo shows include exhibitions with Bechtler Stiftung, Uster (2024); New Art Gallery Walsall, Walsall (2023); Modern Art Gallery, London (2022); Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh (2021); Des Moines Art Centre (2020); Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2019); Le Festival d'Automne, Paris (2017); Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle (2017); Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (2016); Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2016); Gemeentemuseum, The Hague (2013); Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas (2012); Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow (2012) among others. Her group shows include exhibitions with Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2020); Lenbachhaus, Munich (2017); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2016); Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (2014); Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2012); Carré d'Art-Musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes (2011); Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn (2010); Tate Britain, London (2009) and many more. Black represented Scotland at the 57th Venice Biennale (2017) and her work was shown at Manifesta 10 in St. Petersburg (2014).

Her works feature in major public collections such as the Tate Britain, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas; RISD Museum, Rhode Island; Gemeentemuseum, The Hague; Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona; National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens; Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich; Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh; KiCo Collection, Munich, among others.