

MICHÈLE PAGEL

schön ist anders

6.6.– 25.7.2025

Michèle Pagel addresses disproportions and, with subtle sensitivity, seeks to restore their balance. For the exhibition *schön ist anders*, she layers her observations into multiple strata of meaning. She draws on myths that have dominated human history since antiquity: “Old stories”, the artist says, “must contain either truth or necessity—otherwise, they don’t grow old”.

The classical motif of Saint Sebastian embodies the iconographic transformation of a historical figure. Even in a highly reduced, abstracted depiction, the figure of Saint Sebastian evokes the endangered cultural heritage of a European present that values openness and respect for minorities—such as the LGBTQ+ community, for whom Saint Sebastian has become an icon.

Representations of locusts recur throughout this dystopian exhibition as a biblical motif—arranged like an Ikebana or appearing as reliefs of apocalyptic swarms—*schön ist anders*.

The scenario is dominated by a supernatural hand that lets candy-like objects (or bombs) slip into a shopping basket—or pulls them upward. Pagel is particularly interested in roots (of things), especially those that break through the surface of asphalt with their life force. Her humorous, though not necessarily benevolent, gaze reveals that critical thinking and ethical concerns can exist without outrage or despair—but not without a playful aesthetic sensibility.

Excerpts from a text by Thomas Brandstätter

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