

Put-to-bed

Tashi Brauen & Chris Bünter, Michael Günzburger, Clare Kenny,
Kong Chun Hei, Valentina Pini and Sabine Schlatter

Opening: 05.11.21 from 18:00

05.11.21 – 18.12.21

Work Descriptions

Tashi Brauen & Chris Bünter

The collaboration between Tashi Brauen & Chris Bünter is a new one, albeit having known each other as friends for years. What came to be was a reactive sequential process, one following the method of *exquisite cadaver*. The works exchanged hands sometimes up to four times. Brauen created monotypes on paper and Bünter responded to these by making square and circular cut-out collages. The paper support for these layered compositions is one already filled with meaning. They used older issues of *Du*, a Swiss magazine existing since 1941 on culture and art history. These supports in this instance might evoke connections to bourgeois intellectual culture, leisure and travel. The intuitively created monotypes and collages fuse together with the printed pages of the magazine. A spontaneous gesture contrasting with the discursive edited content of the page.

The joint collaboration has resulted in recent exhibitions in Basel and Bern, with the third and final "act" (as the artists have described it) of *cadaver, DU* at Last Tango. For each of the acts they created a site-specific work by using the same material every time. The artists "recycled" old pages of a magazine, and in each exhibition space the artists sought out an open-ended approach, one that was responsive and site-specific to each space: In *Put-to-bed* the large-scale installation *A Day in October* (2021) entirely covers one wall. The nearby work *Hans in Glück Eindruck Ross* (2021) shows a reverse side of one of the monotyped collages, making visible tape and the signatures of the artists. Together they display a positive and negative space reversal. For each act there is a specially created artist book. After working together for some time, the artists thought some of the back sides were just as appealing as the front side. In order to make both sides visible they recreated the magazine format. The artist book is available to see at the front desk.

Michael Günzburger

Despite there being no depiction of lying bodies, the depressions and creases seen in this monotype inevitably convey some kind of human presence. Günzburger is interested in the bed as a highly loaded and symbolic object. Why is it so? What does it incite in our conscious? A site of intimacy, comfort and rest. A place where the heavy load of our weight is being supported. A haven for sexual pleasures and a place for non-rational and unconscious thoughts and dreams. Günzburger considers these bed traces to be ghostly residues of happenings, they are clues to an opulent scenario: fruits being savoured in bed.

Günzburger once visited The Holy Sepulchre's Stone of Anointing in Jerusalem, a stone that is believed to have been the place where Jesus' body was cared for before burial. Visitors come and pour a bit of oil onto the stone and wash it off with a cloth, making the cloth holy. The pilgrims make their own blessed touch relic. Günzburger returned and made a print of the slab, which he realized resembled a small bed and spawned the idea to make a print of an actual bed. The combination of these elements resounded exceptionally well with his ongoing interest, namely that of working with loaded subjects, as well as the enchanting connection to lithography (oil and stone being used in the printing process).

Taking printmaking to new heights, Günzburger worked together with printing expert Thomi Wolfensberger in a hangar and used a custom-made planographic printing process applying 24 tons of weight on a 6m² surface. (The pressure applied is the equivalent to a thumb pressing gently on a piece of paper.) The printing machine was originally created to be able to print the fur of a polar bear, a longstanding project of his. The monotype of a mattress and sheets also contains the remainders of pressed raspberries, blackberries, figs and eggs. A sensuous succulent affair. Is that a flag? Are those cosmic clouds? Does it propel a desire to get under the sheets?

Kong Chun Hei

Kong Chun Hei's ink on paper artworks capture the surface of ordinary objects be it brick, tape or creased paper. His practice looks into the uncertainty of perception and the necessity of distance. Kong uses the medium of drawing to develop a diverse practice, including video, animation and installation. His process is labor intensive and

solitary. His drawings are created with a 1.0 mm Faber-Castell ink pen and 300 g Fabriano paper, a paper that he often sands down to precisely remove excess ink. This process which requires an intense focus and nerves of steel, seems to have become what art historian Dr. Fabienne Ruppen describes as “somewhat a limit to the creative act, in the sense that it is both enabling and constraining.”

The works *Black Holes I* (2016) and *White Holes III* (2016) are drawings of target paper. Target paper is used for shooting practice, a sport requiring precision much like the aptness of the draftsman. This shot-through sheet was then photocopied, once with a closed lid and once with an open lid, the bullet holes turning white when overexposed or black when underexposed. The photocopied image, an inevitably imperfect replica is also framed by a white or black rectangle and thin vertical lines caused by the photocopier. Fabienne Ruppen notes how with this work Kong “is emphasizing both the physical destruction of the target paper and the technical defect of the machine... the translation process involved in *Black Holes I* and *White Holes III* goes along with a “blurring effect” (Kong) that obscures the [original] subject matter.”

Kong Chun Hei is interested in the transition of the act of seeing into a sense of knowing. He states that “my aim is to learn how to see in an age when the only thing certain is uncertainty.” The future of Kong Chun Hei’s hometown Hong Kong is riddled with this very uncertainty with over 90,000 people having left Hong Kong in the past year.

Clare Kenny

Clare Kenny forges narratives based on her relationship to materials, her working-class background, her northern English upbringing and a desire to deflate classical sculptural traditions. Her practice centers around manipulations of materials, be it the reworking the photographic image or casting everyday objects such as kitchenware from the street, garbage bins, denim, or curtains.

Put-to-bed features a fountain titled *Arse Over Elbow* (2021). The time-based sculpture starts out as white plaster casts and as the exhibition progresses the process of colouring takes place. Different coloured water will run over the surface creating multiple patina. The ink-coloured water stains the form and corrodes the plaster, transforming, and ultimately degrading it over time. Kenny has been exploring the social status of fountains: “Fountains as focal points in public squares and in private estates of the once ruling classes were signs of wealth and opulence. I have been using these as a motif with which to question those power structures.” The titles and the forms allude to old and worn-out bodies, or bodies out of control, perhaps through the misuse of alcohol. The working-class life is one associated with a high “allostatic load,” a measure of wear and tear on the body resulting from work stress. The whimsical-looking exposed body parts resembling a bottom, also take up another heavy topic, that of body-shaming or slut-shaming and the cruel tendency to shame working class people.

Three additional artworks make visible the stain-making process at a later stage. Two wall-mounted works, *Keine Weisse Weste* (2021) are casts of a photographic developing tray. What we see mirrored conceptually is the function of the original cast object in which the photographic images are also developed through chemical formation and layering. The standing sculpture titled *Troglo-dyte* (2021) is made of a cast of hand-sewn fabric and leftover-from-the-studio plaster casts of coffee cups and cheese tubs. The emphasis on titles reoccurs: Calling someone a troglodyte is usually an insult and describes someone that hopelessly is behind the times.

Valentina Pini

Working primarily with installation, video and sculpture, Pini has a fascination with materials and is interested in challenging our common perception of matter. Often working with perishable as well as synthetic substances she researches texture, material specificity, shape and the potential for transformation. Pini works beyond the veneer of material reality and turns materials into the unrecognizable, in what is an engaged act of speculating and falsifying to wonder the spectator. She has previously worked with materials such as watermelons, shells and aubergines. The work *Plump and Warm they Slip out of Hand* (2021) is attached from the ceiling. It is composed of a series of plexiglass panels, each with a constellation of different color-shaped protrusions. These units are at once ambiguous and seductive. Each panel is warmed by a heat gun. Fruits and vegetables of all sorts have been pressed inside, creating protruding forms. These cavities are filled with bio-resin, mimicking natural tones or colours associated with bodily fluids. This work pushes the experience of seeing to its chimerical potential. A feeling of being underwater might prevail while looking at them. We might see a living ecosystem: proliferating worms and bacteria. Pini notes how: “Each figure is a morphological exploration, moving between abstraction and figuration. The visible shapes, which are floating or sinking, are reminiscent of enlarged microorganisms seen under the lens of a backlit microscope.”

Sabine Schlatter

The selected works by Schlatter reflect the new directions recently taken by the artist. Since 2011 Schlatter has been doing large-scale gestural drawings. Made up of numerous layers of pencil on paper they are abstract and biomorphic suggesting imageries linked to life cycles, emotional states, spirituality and sexuality.

In 2020 Schlatter worked for six weeks in the Wolfensberger lithographic studio as part of a SNF research project co-authored by Michael Günzburger. In both series the artist worked with overlapping layers of color and line in the medium of lithography. Her experience with print-making steered her interest in making paintings. She has been experimenting with the luminous effects of egg tempera, acrylic and oil paint. In her new paintings she plays with scale and translucency creating a kaleidoscopic illusory space, with the presence here and there of what could be real. We see crisp cut-outs with halos, a lacework of colour and wondrous swirls of lightness and darkness.

Bios

Tashi Brauen (born 1980, CH) holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from HGKZ (the former Zurich University of the Arts), and Institut-Kunst, FHNW, Basel. He currently lives and works in Zurich. In 2013 he founded the exhibition space Counter Space in Zurich with Angelo Romano. He has exhibited at institutions such as Kunsthau Stefisburg (2016), Kunstmuseum Thun (2015), Kunstmuseum Bern (2013), FABRIKculture in Hégenheim (2013), Stadtgalerie Bern (2012), Centre PasquArt in Biel (2012) and Museum Bäregasse in Zurich (2012). Recent solo exhibitions include *Bitte warten* at Artachment in Basel (2019), *Hold on to that Paper* at Counter Space in Zurich (2018), *Bending Forms* at Ronewa Art Projects in Berlin.

Chris Bünter (born 1961, CH) was born in Breganzona and lives in Zurich since 1997. He completed his art studies at the Kunstgewerbeschule Basel and the Warsaw Academy (Winiarski and Konieczny), Art History at the University of Basel and Polish Philology at the University of Warsaw. Chris Bünter has been working in the Manuscript Department of Zurich's Central Library since 2005. Recent exhibitions include *Das Leben ist kein Ponyhof* at Kunstmuseum Olten (2018), *2 Anrufe* at Counter Space in Zurich (2015), *Bruno Jakob. The Touch. Kunst in der Krypta* at Grossmünster Zürich (2013).

Michael Günzburger (born 1974, CH) currently lives and works in Zürich. Michael Günzburger is an artistic-scientific collaborator at IFCAR, Institute for Contemporary Art Research at the Zurich University of the Arts. His research project Hands-on is a documentation of artistic-technical processes in printmaking. Recent group exhibitions include *Material Transformation* at VFO, Verein für Originalgrafik (2021), *Werkschau Kanton Zürich* at Haus Konstruktiv (2020), *The Dark side of the Moon* at Kunsthau Zürich (2019). Recent solo exhibitions include *Das Ende der Spur* at Hans Erni Museum Luzern (2020), *This is what you get* at Die Diele in Zürich (2015), und dann nie mehr at Kunstmuseum Bern at PROGR in Bern. Michael Günzburger's works are held in numerous collections, such as Kunsthau Zürich or Kunstmuseum Bern.

Clare Kenny (born 1976, UK) lives and works in Basel, but comes from Manchester, England. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Chelsea School of Art and Design in London and MA in Public Spheres at HSLU Luzern, Hochschule für Gestaltung Luzern. Clare Kenny is a member of the Royal Society of British Sculptors (MRSS) and was awarded the Kunstcredit Prize from the City of Basel in 2013 and 2017. Her works have been shown at Kunsthau Zürich (2014), Kunsthalle Basel (2014) Kunsthau Baselland (2012), Kunstmuseum Luzern (2015) and Aargauer Kunsthau (2016) among other places.

Kong Chun Hei (born 1987, CN) currently lives and works in Hong Kong. He holds a BA in Fine Arts from The Chinese University of Hong Kong. In 2018 he exhibited at Last Tango and produced a site-specific installation. His most recent solo exhibition was held in Taiwan in 2020 at TKG+ Projects, Taipei. Recent group exhibitions include *Borrowed Scenery* at Cattle Depot Artist Village in Hong Kong (2019), *Today Could Have Been A Happy Day* at Taikang Space in Beijing (2018), *From Ocean to Horizon* at CFCCA Manchester (2017). Kong was awarded the Gaylord Chan Painting Award, Cheung's Fine Arts Award, Y.S. Hui Fine Arts Award and Grotto Fine Art Ltd.'s Award.

Valentina Pini (born 1982, CH) was born in Ticino and lives and works in Zurich. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from HEAD, Geneva University of Art and Design and graduated in 2015 with an MA in Sculpture at Royal College of Art, London. In 2018 she was granted the Pro Helvetia Residency in Johannesburg, in 2021 she received the Residency Atelier Berlin from the Canton of Zurich as well as the Pro Helvetia Residency in CAP Tierra del Fuego, Patagonia. In September 2021 she curated *Anti-MEs* with work by Lisa Biedlingmaier at Biennale dell'immagine in Chiasso. Pini's recent solo exhibitions include *Rimembranza* with Alan Bogana at Nano in Zürich (2021), *Curiosity Killed the Cat* at Kunsthalle Arbon (2020), *With Two Naked Eyes Watching Slime on the Ocean Floor* at ZQM in Berlin (2019). Her works are held in numerous collections including Kunstsammlung Stadt Zürich, ZKB Zürcher Kantonalbank and Kunstsammlung Kanton Zürich.

Sabine Schlatter (born 1977, CH) lives and works in Zürich. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from ZHdK, Zurich University of the Arts. From 2009 to 2011 she was granted a studio scholarship at Stiftung Binz39. Sabine Schlatter participated in the 2016 edition of Manifesta in Zurich (*What People do for Money* at Kunsthalle Zürich). She has held a two-person exhibition at Last Tango (with Hans Witschi) in 2017. On this occasion a publication was released. Recent exhibitions include *Art Cabinet* in Studio K3 at Kunstmuseum Olten (2021), *Träume werden wahr* at Helmhaus in Zürich (2019) and *Zukunft* at Kunsthalle Schlieren (2018).

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