

## Kapsch Contemporary Art Prize 2019 Anita Leisz

October 18, 2019 through February 23, 2020

### Press Conference:

Thursday, October 17, 2019, 10 a.m.

### Opening:

Thursday, October 17, 2019, 7 p.m.



Anita Leisz, untitled, 2019, iron, black enamel base coat, Riess Werke, Ybbsitz, © Anita Leisz

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Anita Leisz (b. 1973 in Leoben, Austria) is the fourth recipient of the Kapsch Contemporary Art Prize, an award to support young artists who are based in Austria, following Anna-Sophie Berger, Julian Turner, and Ute Müller.

Anita Leisz's works seem minimalistic, abstract, and reduced at first glance. A more thorough second glance allows us to look behind the scenes, revealing Leisz's love for detail. Her works create a tense relationship between interior and exterior space, between the flawless "white cube" and its structural "skeleton," while she manages to direct the viewer's eye not only to the spatial whole but especially to the works' changing network of associations. Opening up a space for a variety of projections, she gives the viewer options that vary depending on the spatial situation. Her works influence the places in which they are presented and vice versa.

Anita Leisz's artistic practice cannot be easily pinned down, neither to a defined medium nor any particular interpretation nor a specific spatial situation. Yet it is exactly this ambiguity which makes Leisz's work so alluring: She juggles obvious manipulations with those that elude us, makes things visible and at the same time conceals them, balances precisely targeted interventions with a way of simply leaving things be.

Her method is furthermore characterized by a use of inconspicuous materials—frequently, construction materials—that appear anything but loud and yet have much to say. Leisz's concerns materialize above all in her way of treating surfaces, which often bear traces of wear and tear. Markings such as scratches are anything but rare in her works. Here, Leisz breaks with the fetish of minimal art for industrial materials. If the dreams and aspirations of industrialism reached their zenith in minimal art, Leisz's oeuvre can be read as a wake-up call of sorts that rings out from industrialism's abandoned construction site.

For her first solo exhibition at mumok, the artist created a new group of works that was manufactured in cooperation with the RIESS enamel factory, an Austrian family-run enterprise, with whom the artist had already collaborated on previous projects. Shown in the exhibition are white enameled, framelike constructions. Her works' clearly structured forms enter into a dynamic dialogue with the space that surrounds them and work both as single objects and as one large expansive installation.

The jury, composed of Cosima Rainer, head of the art collection and archive at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, Franz Rainer Thalmeir, curator at Kunstraum Lakeside, Thomas D. Trummer, director of Kunsthau Bregenz, Georg Kapsch, CEO of Kapsch Group, and mumok director Karola Kraus, selected Anita Leisz from nine nominees. "From the numerous submissions distinguished by their high quality, the

jury reached the unanimous decision to award Anita Leisz with the Kapsch Contemporary Art Prize 2019. Her oeuvre—including paintings, sculptures, and spatial installations—is characterized by an extraordinarily sophisticated treatment of materials, in which the artist draws inspiration from interior fittings. Serially produced wood-fiberboard, particleboard, plasterboard, or sheet metal are rendered via economic, precise interventions. Her works' clearly structured forms enter into a dynamic dialogue with the space that surrounds them, unfolding an sense of atmosphere that seems to speak directly to the viewers," stated the jury.

Anita Leisz studied at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna under Professor Franz Xaver Ölzant and Professor Michelangelo Pistoletto. Exhibitions include: mumok; Halle für Kunst, Lüneburg; Kunsthalle Bern; Belvedere 21; MAK; Kunsthalle Exnergasse; Künstlerhaus Graz; Haus der Kunst, Munich; Salzburger Kunstverein; Secession, Vienna; Generali Foundation, Vienna; Kunsthalle Nürnberg; Kunstverein Hamburg.

Curated by Marianne Dobner

A catalogue will be published in conjunction with the exhibition that takes the Kapsch Contemporary Art Prize as a starting point and focuses on the facts of the years of successful cooperation between mumok and Kapsch Group.