

ANDREA HELLER

7.7.–8.9.2019

KUNSTHAUS
CENTRE D'ART

Andrea Heller (b. 1975, CH) makes works on paper as well as ceramic, plaster and glass objects, in which a world of fragile landscapes, associative traces and anthropomorphic hybrid creatures unfolds. In her works on paper soft colour gradations in watercolour and ink develop into crystalline objects and forms, that oscillate between different scales – diffuse and hard, attractive and uncanny. At the same time the artist examines systems, sequences and orders. This becomes particularly clear in her large scale drawings as well as in a new series of paintings on textile. The artist, who lives and works in Biel, has conceived the work *L'Endroit de l'envers* (2019) especially for this exhibition. The painted, wooden structure reaches almost to the ceiling of the approximately 6m high Salle Poma. Reflecting the conditions of our environment, Andrea Heller focuses on aspects such as deconstruction, instability and changeableness, creating an installation which fills the space and can be experienced in a number of ways.

The exhibition at the Kunsthaus Pasquart brings together key works of Andrea Heller's which underline the breadth of her artistic output. Although painting and drawing are at the centre of her practice, the artist regards her work as encompassing various media and materials. Sculptures and installations occupy an increasingly important place in her practice. However, drawing runs as a constant through her work and can be considered as the starting point. For example, her ceramic and glass objects have the quality of drawings. She draws her inspiration, ideas and means of expression from the events and circumstances with which we are confronted in our world. In addition to abstraction and the decomposition of volumes in relation to space, she is interested in social structures and architectures, their relation to the human body and their meaning for people and the landscape.

Heller develops her works on the basis of found visual material that she comes across in books, newspapers or the internet. What interests her here is the formal construction of images, the ways in which from a birds' eye view a settlement is inscribed in the desert as though it were a drawing, or a wall draws a line through a landscape, splitting it. She looks for a principle or set of rules that define such constructs, for forms and surfaces that these everyday phenomena produce. Thus on the one hand smaller, fragile seeming drawings, but also unusually large, almost three-dimensional works are created which turn these structures into a mixture of floating objects, hybrids and uncontrolled growths. The artist sets herself a simple formal principle (triangle, square, drops, stripes) and builds these basic forms, which she continually repeats in her images, into a huge monster. She dips her brush in the ink only once per plane so that each individual basic form consists of a gradation or layering. Structures are created from these colour nuances that merely hint at motifs, always staying immaterial. The artist remarks that she doesn't seek images but rather finds these by chance.

She explains that an important aspect of her work is the perception of a place as a fragile space in which peripheral thought bubbles can't be excluded. She reflects again and again on how external conditions influence our environment and how differently this can be perceived: as protection, as threat, or as limitation. She uses layers to construct works, deconstruct and abstract themes and contexts in such a way that they can be read and experienced in multiple ways. Andrea Heller's works do not therefore

create a simple unified body of work but contain a continuous mixture of understanding and not understanding, taking into account the reflective gaze of the distanced observer and putting into perspective prevailing points of view, which the artist considers to always be in flow and subject to change.

The presentation ends in the Salle Poma with a new, site specific work. *L'Endroit de l'envers* is a work as radical as it is subtle: an overpowering installation constructed from wood and painted a rich black. The panels are painted with several layers of ink, producing an all-consuming sense of depth. On entering the space, one is confronted with the side view, leaving an impression of toughness and closedness. Only on moving round the structure does its form reveal itself – a kind of over-sized house of cards, towering over the viewer. Depending on where one is in the room, the structure appears almost as a kind of dwelling, only to confront the viewer again with precarious instability. Heller's central concern with abstraction and decomposition, emptiness and absence, brutality and at the same time a delicacy of space and volume becomes evident.

L'Endroit de l'envers acts as a link to the context of the exhibition as well as to basic themes in Andrea Heller's practice such as brutality and fragility. In addition, the installation also forges a bridge with earlier works such as *Meteoriten* (2004-07), *Panzersperrren* (2006) or *Überbau* (2005). The artist balances the oppressive weight of the meteorite with smaller objects. In her watercolours we are confronted over and over again by daring ideas resulting from the artist's ability to take the world at face value.

Curator of the exhibition

Felicity Lunn, director Kunsthaus Pasquart

Publication accompanying the exhibition

The exhibition is accompanied by a richly illustrated publication with texts by Olivier Kaeser, Aoife Rosenmeyer and Felicity Lunn (DT / FR / ENG), published in Verlag für moderne Kunst.

Guided tours

Thurs 11.7.2019, 6pm (fr) Valentine Yerly, art educator

Thurs 5.9.2019 6pm (dt) Felicity Lunn, director Kunsthaus Pasquart

Artist's talk

Thurs 22.8.2019, 6pm (dt) Andrea Heller in conversation with Felicity Lunn



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Many works in the exhibition are for sale. Please inquire at the reception.

KUNSTHAUS CENTRE D'ART

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