

ZILLA LEUTENEGGER***Mezzanin***

January 16 - March 6, 2021

One time there was a picket fence with space to gaze from hence to thence. (...)
(Christian Morgenstern)

Galerie Peter Kilchmann is pleased to present the first solo exhibition of Zilla Leutenegger (*1968 in Zurich; lives and works in Zurich and Soazza) at our new Zurich branch at Rämistrasse 33. The exhibition will inaugurate the new location and will spread out over all five exhibition rooms. Zilla makes use of the new spatial situation with a carefully curated selection of works inspired by the special floor plan and the domestic old building character of the new location. On display are works in various media that reflect and refine the entire range of Zilla's artistic repertoire. In addition to two multimedia installations with video projection, newly conceived work cycles of small and large-format monotypes on newspaper and cotton paper, sculptural mirror works as well as bronze sculptures will be presented.

The expression *Mezzanin* (German for mezzanine) simply refers to a small intermediate floor. With Zilla, the term immediately obtains a metaphorical connotation. In the sense of Christian Morgenstern's poem *Der Lattenzaun (The Picket Fence)*, the artist weaves a poetic connection between the architecture of the exhibition space and her very personal universe of "(inter)spaces", which she empties and fills and revitalizes. Zilla's "spaces" are quite often imaginary; they inspire the viewer to dream and provide a retreat from the hustle of everyday life.

In the exhibition, each of the five rooms tells its own story. The first floor forms a nocturnal interior: a large-format monotype entitled *Tintarella di Luna* shows a cat in its basket illuminated by the large, shining moon. In another monotype (*Lampenkopf* [Lamp Head], both 184 x 136 cm), the quiet, dark surface is broken by the light of a bright, cubic lampshade, which is carried on the head by a seated person in a surrealistic pose. Sharp outlines are softly drawn by black shadows or swallowed up by them completely. In the shop window facing the street, a cat prowls around, which on closer inspection turns out to be a sculpture cast in bronze (45 x 11 x 37 cm, see invitation card). Its flat, angular shape is reminiscent of a silhouette that has grown into the third dimension. The relief of a candle with a projected, flickering flame fills the room with its warm light.

From the lower floor, the soft sound of a piano resonates and entices the visitor to further explore the rooms. While descending the stairs, the gaze falls on a tiny grand piano in the middle of the room, no larger than a teacup. On its outsize shadow on the wall, an equally outsize hand plays the intro of the famous Piano Concerto No. 3 by Sergei Rachmaninoff in a two-minute loop. The piano is a recurrent motif in Zilla's work. The sound recording of the installation, which bears the wordplay *Stoneway* as its title, is played by the artist herself.

The journey of discovery continues into the middle room on the upper floor, which forms an intimate cabinet of small monotypes with colorful interior views. Titles such as *Papas Werkstatt* (Papa's Workshop), *Alpküche* (Alpine Kitchen), and *Morning Sun in the Bath* (all 83.5 x 50.5 cm) evoke a sense of home and childhood memories. The room to the left is dedicated to a new series of monotypes, for which Zilla chose newspaper clippings from recent months as image carriers. The works are grouped as a diptych or individually, and show simple spatial views that build on the concept of earlier works, such as *Blinky Palermo* from the series *Lights out* from 2017. Here, Zilla creates a delicate interplay between color, surface, light, and shadow. The coloration changes from pastel shades that are as bright as day to monochrome night blue. The figure of a young woman appears in the foreground. She poses calmly and serenely in her swinging skirt or strides through the respective interior with her head lowered.

Against the background of current events, the familiar figure, often read as the artist's alter ego, takes on a new level of meaning. The newspaper clippings were carefully selected and capture key moments in politics and business since the beginning of the first Corona wave in spring. The work *23. Mai 2020 (der Börsengang)* [23 May 2020 (the IPO)] (46.5 x 63 cm) shows on the left side the fluctuation in stock market data caused by the crisis, while on the right side, the skyscrapers of London's financial district Canary Wharf form a pattern on the protagonist's skirt. The works look like pages of a diary and reflect a phase in which the world has got into a state of uncertain waiting but also of calm and deceleration.

Back through the middle room, one enters the so-called "Lounge", which is the last room of the exhibition. Several sculptural sideboards made of polished chrome steel are arranged on the wall at different heights forming a bar. Painted objects such as tumbler glasses and little bottles of spirits are placed on the individual shelves. The room's architecture is characterized by the round arch of the entrance portal on the first floor, which projects into the room as a semicircular window. The visitor becomes aware that he is in an "in-between space", the mezzanine, which here turns into a place of exchange and encounter.

Zilla Leutenegger's works have been exhibited internationally since 1996. On May 1, 2021 the Bündner Kunstmuseum Chur will inaugurate an extensive solo exhibition of the artist's work. In this context, the publication of a comprehensive monographic exhibition catalogue is planned. Solo exhibitions of the past years have taken place in the following institutions, (selection): L'Abbatiale, Bellelay (2019); Griffelkunst, Hamburg (2018); Musée Jenisch, Vevey (2016); Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2015); Centro de Arte Caja Burgos CAB, Burgos (2014); Museum Franz Gertsch, Burgdorf (2014). Among the most important group exhibitions should be mentioned *Fly me to the Moon*, Kunsthaus Zürich and Museum der Moderne, Salzburg (2019); *The World on Paper*, Palais Populaire of Deutsche Bank, Berlin (2018); *Interval in Space*, Osage Art Foundation, Hong Kong (2017); Sydney Biennial (2014). Zilla's works can be found in public collections of institutions such as Centro Gallego de Arte Contemporáneo, Santiago de Compostela; Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos, Burgos; Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf; Sammlung Goetz, Munich; Museion Museo d'arte moderna e contemporanea, Bolzano; Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, Schaulager, Basel; Kunsthaus, Zurich; Kunstmuseum Basel, and many more.