

T +41 44 272 15 15
F +41 44 272 18 88
info@kunsthallezurich.ch
www.kunsthallezurich.ch

Press release:

Ana Jotta

Composição

8 June–15 September 2024

Press preview Friday 7 June 11 am
Opening Friday 7 June 6–10 pm
Zurich Art Weekend 7–9 June 2024

A simple, open-ended question triggered the thinking behind this exhibition: how do you introduce the work of Ana Jotta (Lisbon, 1946) to a public that, on the whole, is unfamiliar with it? In other words, how can one reveal her radically polymorphous work when, given the size of the exhibition, the possibility of showing its full breadth and diversity had been dismissed at the outset?

The exhibition title, borrowed from one of the works, neither alludes to nor comments on the artist's practice; it refers instead to the exhibition itself as a construct in the double sense of a process and an outcome. Rather than adopting a certain framework of reference or point of view when selecting the artworks, one basic rule was followed: to choose an artwork and thus set in motion a process of association between works that enhances an understanding of the artist's work, providing insight into the intricacies of her practice and the idiosyncrasy of her subjective world. It was an intuitive and open-ended heuristic process with neither map nor compass. Underlying the process of selection was a wish to compose a kaleidoscopic exhibition that could reflect the astonishing formal diversity that characterises Jotta's artistic output. The exhibition provides ample evidence of her versatility with different materials and techniques. What may be disconcerting for someone unfamiliar with her work, however, is the absence of a recognisable style as a common denominator for the pieces shown here, or at least some of them. The result is what looks as if it might be a group exhibition.

In fact, Jotta's work has never had a specific style. The varied character of her output was already clearly noticeable during her early career, when she took part in several group exhibitions. Since 1986, when she produced the series of paintings that would be shown in her first solo exhibition the following year, the development of her work has been marked by a succession of series. Each

**Kunsthalle
Zürich**

**Limmatstrasse 270
CH-8005 Zürich**

new one, as a rule, is very different both in terms of medium and style from that which preceded it. Eschewing any chronological linearity, constantly foiling any possibility of arrangement by phase or period, Jotta's artistic trajectory is punctuated by successive deviations and discontinuities, throughout which she has prodigiously expanded her realm of creative possibilities, step by step. She doesn't do it strategically. It is instead a reflection of her temperament: she dislikes retracing her footsteps. Curiously enough, the process of selecting the works for this exhibition eventually focused on those that do not belong to any series or group – she calls them her only children. Amid what seem like an atomised exhibition, the attributes that have been common to the artist's practice for over four decades come to the fore: a certain frugality of means; a conciseness of expression; and an energetic and spirited mind. This is her signature.

Appropriation is at the heart of Jotta's modus operandi. She is an omnivorous appropriationist who recycles and transforms the most disparate things. Her idiosyncratic repertoire is made up of found objects (with a predilection for insignificant objects that have had a life of their own), all kinds of images (works by illustrious artists or renowned comic book authors, illustrations from children's colouring books or vernacular images, to name just a few) and text taken from a variety of sources (quotes from a French language textbook, for example, the name of a well-known encyclopaedic collection of books, the title of a film or book, or a printed text found posted in the street). Her choices are not driven by the principle of aesthetic indifference that Marcel Duchamp associated with the ready-made; they are invariably governed by identification or affection. They can truly be said to demonstrate a form of sensibility, showing her taste for very different things. She does not care, however, and never has, to comment or reflect on the things that she appropriates and their original meanings.

Jotta sees the appropriated materials, including artwork, as fragments of life, of her life; therefore art, as she delightfully puts it, is a quotation from life. 'In one's work,' she wrote in a 2002 letter to an art critic, 'what isn't a quotation? It's about life, the raw material, which is first processed and then quoted. Life doesn't need work; it needs maintenance and a little expedience. Work needs work (it's a highly specific blood type – it only accepts its own). It is a quotation of life, proffered and manifest, that enters through the eyes. So, it is always a representation. It can be sharp,

T +41 44 272 15 15
F +41 44 272 18 88
info@kunsthallezurich.ch
www.kunsthallezurich.ch

produced in a workshop, made by a single person, a single parent. It enters through the eyes and leaves through the eyes – the mirror of the soul.’

In 2010, in one of the short texts she has written over the last eighteen years to accompany her exhibitions, she writes, ‘Now, we know, I know, *nulla è nuovo* (nothing is new, nothing new); I could also use a quote (and an old one at that...): “Within the world there is no place for other creations. There is just an opportunity for reintegration and continuity. Everything that could exist already exists. Nothing else can be created but revealed.”’ (Spinoza, quoted by Clarice Lispector)

In another of her short texts a year later she wittily says, to allay any doubts: ‘I can assure you that, as a singular person rather than a collective entity, it was all done by me.’

Miguel Wandschneider

The exhibition is curated by Miguel Wandschneider.

With the support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

We would like to thank Pedro Álvares Ribeiro, CESAR - Coleção Espírito Santo Almeida Roque, Coleção da Caixa Geral de Depósitos, Coleção Figueiredo Ribeiro, Collection Catarina Maldonado and Luís Marques Pais, Collection Gerardo van Waalwijk van Doorn, Collection Juan Várez, Collection Peter Meeker, Sílvia Dauder, Mark Deputter, Fundação de Serralves - Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Cornelia Grassi, greengrassi, Lab’Bel collection, Pierre Leguillon, Tobias Madison, Miguel Nabinho, ProjecteSD, Philippe Vergne

Kunsthalle
Zürich

Limmatstrasse 270
CH-8005 Zürich

T +41 44 272 15 15
F +41 44 272 18 88
info@kunsthallezurich.ch
www.kunsthallezurich.ch

Artist's biography:

Ana Jotta (b. Lisbon, 1946) attended the Lisbon Fine Arts Academy from 1963-64. Her work was shown for the first time in 1979 and she participated in a few group exhibitions over the following years. From 1977-1987, she was very involved with theatre, as both set and costume designer and actress. During those years she worked closely with theatre director Osório Mateus on productions based on texts by Denis Diderot, Frank Wedekind, Gil Vicente, Samuel Beckett, Almeida Garret and Tennessee Williams. Set design for films *The Other One*, 1980, directed by João Botelho, and *Silvestre*, 1981, directed by João César Monteiro. First solo exhibition in 1987, becoming, in her own words, a 'professional amateur' in the art world. Retrospective exhibition, *Ana Jotta Street*, at the Serralves Museum, Porto, 2005. Culturgest, Lisbon, presented the exhibition *The Conclusion of the Precedent* in 2014, which focussed on work made since 2005; following this exhibition she was awarded the EDP Foundation Art Prize and the Portuguese AICA Award. An entirely different survey exhibition, *Cassandra*, at Culturgest, Porto, 2016. Solo exhibitions outside of Portugal include: *Ti re li re*, Crédac, Ivry-sur-Seine, 2016; *pɔ: tju'gi: z 'hæ.n.di.kra: ft.*, Établissement d'en face, Brussels, 2016; *Das-ist-Das?*, Temporary Gallery, Cologne, 2018; *Une chambre en ville*, Cité internationale des arts, Paris, 2022; and *Never the Less*, CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco, 2023. In 2017, she received the Rosa Schapire Art Prize awarded by the Friends of the Hamburger Kunsthalle. In September 2024 her exhibition *On peut, on peut encore* will open at WIELS, Brussels.

Curator's biography:

From 2006 until 2017, Miguel Wandschneider (b. 1969) was artistic director at Culturgest, Lisbon and Porto. In this role he curated many exhibitions, including with Jean-Luc Moulène, 2007, Walid Raad, 2007, Wilhelm Oorebeek, 2008, Jochen Lempert, 2009, Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys, 2009, Koenraad Dedobbeleer, 2010, Asier Mendizabal, 2010, Michael E. Smith, 2012, Jef Geys, 2012, Michel Auder, 2013, Walter Swennen, 2013, Ana Jotta, 2014 and 2016, Helen Mirra, 2014, Florian Hecker, 2015, Guy de Cointet, 2016, Dorota Jurczac, 2016, Isidoro Valcárcel Medina, 2016, and Alice Creischer, 2017. Since 2017, Wandschneider has curated a large survey of the work of Jochen Lempert at Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, CA2M, in Madrid, 2018, as well as exhibitions by Ana Jotta at Temporary Gallery, in Cologne, 2018, in collaboration with Regina Baruncke, and the CCA Wattis Institute, in San Francisco, 2023, in collaboration with Anthony Huberman. He is currently preparing another Ana Jotta exhibition in collaboration with Anthony Huberman, to open in September 2024 at WIELS, Brussels.

Press contact:

Should you require preview images or wish to coordinate an interview with the curator or the artist, please contact Aoife Rosenmeyer:
+41 (0)44 272 15 15 or presse@kunsthallezurich.ch

Kunsthalle
Zürich

Limmatstrasse 270
CH-8005 Zürich