

lesen [Literatur]

Opening: 15 Jan. 2015

Duration: 16 Jan. – 14 Mar. 2015

Artists and authors

Assunta Abd El Azim Mohamed / Christine Lavant, Hugo Canoilas / Malcolm Lowry, Clemens Denk / Friederike Mayröcker, Petra Egg / Julio Cortázar, Simon Häussle / F. Scott Fitzgerald, Barbara Kapusta / Audre Lorde, Ute Müller / Gertrude Stein, Annelies Oberdanner / Birgit Schwaner, Bernhard Rappold / Jörg Fauser, Dorothea Trappel / Ernst Jandl, Jakub Vrba / Thomas Bernhard, Flora Watzal / Marianne Fritz

Concept: Ingeborg Strobl

Information is omnipresent, knowledge is available at any time. Simultaneousness, networking, multitasking and the pressure for results seem unavoidable at many if not all levels. Deeper analysis, contemplative engagement, the exclusive focus on one subject are becoming ever more difficult, if they do not directly serve personal positioning in an all-determining competition. Time is money, efficiency is indispensable.

Language, literature, poetry, narration, novels – for artists, too, it is becoming a frivolous luxury to read literary texts if it does not take place in the context of project-related informative research, without the pressure of marketing, without immediate necessity. Text and book, not text and internet, not text and Kindle – another luxury of attention. To hold an “analogue” book in one’s hands: the weight, the haptic feel of page-turning, the paper, the odour – the cosmos of production and design.

In this sense, the exhibition lesen [Literatur] [reading [literature]] focuses on the books with texts by twelve authors read and selected by twelve artists. Twelve short text quotations in the original language form the basis of each artistic work conceived for the exhibition. Attempts at an atmospheric approach, not appropriation and not illustration. Related sounds, contacts regarding content, concrete, abstract, poetic. Connections that cannot be didactically decoded.

The selected books lie on a book table for viewing and encouragement. The graphic artist and font designer Willi Schmid is responsible for the graphic design of the text quotations for the exhibition display and the catalogue. In addition, in the catalogue, alongside articles by the artists there is an essay by the writer and musician Martin Kubaczek.

Assunta Abd El Azim Mohamed has gone into the reading of the poems of **Christine Lavant** in depth, fascinated by the gloomy imagery, melancholic, threatening and full of sad hopelessness to which the inability of escaping dangers is linked. The powerful symbolic lexicon in the work of the poet has a harmonious echo in the exuberant cosmos of the drawings by Assunta Abd El Azim Mohamed. The work *Das Rätsel* [The Riddle] related to the poem *Im Traum* [Dreaming] revolves around the tragic figure of a the drowned person with new interpretations and reinterpretations of the symbolism used in this text, because *only the riddle is knotted like a net* and everyone uses this net to search for solutions, to fish for answers.

"The Puzzle", 2014

Ball point pen on paper, 110 x 150 cm

Hugo Canoilas calls the book *Under the Volcano* by **Malcolm Lowry** part of his life, he sees himself as being influenced by the text on many levels. At the same time he projects a great deal into the text, which carries over to the observers of his intimate installation by way of the objects shown. The combination of found objects and abstract, informal material creates a grotesque quality, similar to the art of the Baroque era or Romantic painting. The grotesque in its imprecise quality conveys fears and hopes. The shoe as the basis of Hugo Canoilas' objects can be variously understood. Politically as a reference to the Provo anarchist protest movement. The second-hand shoe as a sign of poverty. Or simply as a reference to the book's main character: he has no socks. The shoe as a kind of negative of the sock, as a proxy for the impossibility of representing the non-existence of socks.

"On two hands like giant leaves looking down", 2014

Found objects, paint, electrical cable and light bulb

Clemens Denk and **Friederike Mayröcker**, a poem from the book *Die Abschiede* [The Farewell] and painting on canvas, on paper. In an intuitive mood, freely and not carefree, Clemens Denk writes: farewells come and go. In this case in a circle. On rails. Permanent departure, repeated hopelessness.

"Die Abschiede", 2014

Series in several parts

Screenprint and oil on canvas, 100 x 80 cm

Untitled, 2014

Aquarell on paper, 21 x 29,7 cm

Untitled, 2014

Acrylic on paper, 42 x 60 cm

In her video installation **Petra Egg** deals with the short story *Die Zeugen* [The Witnesses] by **Julio Cortázar**. It concerns an unusual fly. His countryman Borges mentions a passage from a Chinese encyclopaedia in which animals are classified. It ends with "n): those that, from a distance, resemble flies." In Borge's list the fly forms the close, the frame and the part where readers usually break out in

laughter. Cortázar takes the fly from the margin to the centre, it becomes the main character. He tells of events that function without problem as part of literature but seem impossible in reality. Petra Egg feels free to rebut this assumption – a trick.

“DOUBLE (THE LAST BOX)”, 2013/2015
Mixed Media, 350 x 370 x 50 cm

In his drawing/mural **Simon Häussle** condenses the plot of the short story *A Diamond as Big as the Ritz* by **F. Scott Fitzgerald**. The text addresses the industrial revolution, the isolation of the elites, the absurdity of wealth and the simultaneous existence of various realities. The drawing reflects the motif of an excessive accumulation of the most varied things, which repeatedly comes to the fore, the pale grey of the brushstrokes refers to the insubstantiality of the objects, and relieves the heaviness.

“Schicht”, 2014/ 2015
Brush drawing on wall

Barbara Kapusta chooses the poem *Recreation* by the black, queer feminist author **Audre Lorde** as an inspiration for a series of jewellery, and also a series of photographs: decoration and bodies, touching, gestures, an oscillation between the wearable and the object. A similar state of fluctuation, a similar back and forth as in the poem, it is about writing, that is, a productive activity, at the same time about physicality, about love. As in Barbara Kapusta's works, however, what is essential is not clear. Recreation and re-creation: re-invention, putting together again. The animation is not so much the content, the images of the text, but it is the structure as the foundation of narration.

“Recreations” 2014
C-print series, 30 x 45 cm
Edition of 12 pieces of jewellery, copper, sulphur, fluorite crystals, metal and leather

Ute Müller writes that the connection of her work to the texts of **Gertrude Stein** eludes specific explanation – an instinctive recognition of her own procedures (in painting and sculpture) in the author's approach to the material of language.

Untitled, 2015
Egg tempera on canvas

In the exhibition **Annelies Oberdanner** shows reduced sculptural portrait figures. The text work by **Birgit Schwaner** from the story *Held . Lady . Mops* describes the impossibility of describing a person. There is no clearly defined individual, just a complex web of relationships and perspectives – at any moment an individual personal description would be necessary, says Schwaner. This as instructions for the observation of the portrait figures, whose forms are nevertheless monolithic, clear and certain, but not likenesses. Each a formal singularity on a photo of the person portrayed was the starting point

for the development of the form, for example a body posture, a haircut or a detail of clothing. In the sculptural elaboration it is intuitively supplemented and transformed until it resembles self-portrait figures.

„Elli“, 2001

Patinised bronze, 28 x 9 x 8.5 cm

“Sigi“, 1999

Patinised bronze, 34 x 10 x 10 cm

„Claudie“, 1999

Silicon, wood, 23.5 x 10 x 10 cm

„M.“, 2002

Plaster model for bronze casting, 27 x 8 x 9 cm

In *Das Schmale Handtuch* [The Narrow Towel] **Bernhard Rappold** buried himself with creative energy in Harry Gelb's favourite bar and the essential venue in the universe of *Rohstoff* [Raw Material], the drug novel by **Jörg Fauser**. He is as if obsessed by it and transforms the ambience of a shabby, cosy bar into a narrow, horizontal sculpture with a musical instrument. Colloquially, a narrow towel describes a narrow, high house, a gap filler in the urban landscape. A towel can be narrow, stiff, it can be hanging down; Bernhard Rappold's is lying horizontal. A narrow table, soft material, thoroughly haptic. On it the painted box, a small bar piano (almost a virginal, a cembalo, as in the 16th century). Music for the place of refuge.

„The narrow towel“, 2015

Reinforcing rods, fabric, tempera, musical instrument (various materials), 47 x 97 x 450 cm

The photographic work by **Dorothea Trappel** is inspired by the visual poem *schmerz durch reibung* [pain through friction] by **Ernst Jandl**. The photographs are precise, theatrical and absurdly staged. The methods of Berthold Brecht's epic theatre are used, and similar to this procedure, stumbling blocks are built into the content. This is intended to facilitate a more detailed reflection on what is being portrayed; in addition it underlines the artificiality of the staging. The photographs quote numerous clichés whose original meaning is changed – recoded, strongly masculine or feminine coded postures and symbols lead to absurdity. In the same way as Jandl re-forms letters and formally recomposes wording, this work by Dorothea Trappel analyses firmly anchored dogmas and attitudes and attempts to formally recast them and break them up.

“Sascha“, 2014

Pigment print laminated to aluminium, 80 x 70 cm

Jakub Vrba translates the negative and extremely hostile atmosphere of the very brief short story *Hotel Waldhaus* by **Thomas Bernhard** into a sophisticated installation. Behind the scenes of the Kunstraum there is a particularly long, narrow rest-room, threateningly cramped and full of obstacles, off-putting and perhaps even threatening. The questionable aura of this room is additionally strengthened by Jakub Vrba's lighting, entering and lingering here becomes a highly unpleasant experience.

Hotel Waldhaus, 2015
Installation

Flora Watzal attempts to take the concepts of the complex work cosmos of **Marianne Fritz** further and to develop it, to transfer her methods to the medium of video. The quote "cyclamen(bushes) (a bunch) of cyclamen" is the last line of the glossary of the author's second novel, a reference to her working methods of collecting text versions and archive material in ordering systems, repeatedly taking it up and re-editing, as well as an announcement of later pages of the book completely free of textual linearity, which Marianne Fritz calls "text terrain". Flora Watzal chose a longer passage of text for her video; the paragraphs, line breaks and punctuation marks are attributed videographic counterparts and these are systematically transferred to a video recording. A choreography of moving images, stills and black passages develops from the text, the material is heavily edited and subject to interventions that allow no overview of the whole. It breaks down into lines and segments. Like Marianne Fritz, through disruption of the syntactic structure, Flora Watzal produces rearrangements and breaks that create multiple possible readings.

„Zyklamen(buschen) (ein Strauß) Alpenveilchen“, 2014
Video, 7:21 min
Text: <http://www.mariannefritz.at/>

Support programme

- 12 Feb. 2015, 11.00–19.00 *VERSATORIUM* by Peter Waterhouse
- 04 March 2015, 19.00 *A Poem for 22 Small Objects*
Trance Session by Barbara Kapusta
- 11 March 2015, 19.00 *TRUMATIC FELIX LEON WESTNER EVERETT GLENN RAPPOLD*
Sound-Performance by Bernhard Rappold

Opening times: Tuesday – Friday, 11.00–19.00 and Saturday 11.00–15.00, admission free.