

migros museum für gegenwartskunst

Collection

24th June – 13th August 2006

Heidi Bucher – Christine Borland – Maurizio Cattelan – Urs Fischer – Graeme Todd – Martin Kippenberger — Claudia & Julia Müller – Markus Schinwald – Katja Strunz

The exhibition connects the most recent purchases that have been made with the works already purchased for the permanent collection of the migros museum für gegenwartskunst. In the buying history of the museum it has not only been the presentation of the work that was of foremost importance but also the primacy of the idea and the resulting processes. The fundamental necessity to consider societal questions is also met by an undertaking of social responsibility – in the precise meaning of the intentions of the Migros founder Gottlieb Duttweiler. Thanks to a progressive buying policy during the 1990's the collection features numerous important works of Swiss as well as international artists. The integration of the collection into a lively environment, in touch with contemporary art production and addresses an open-minded public from the current concerns of the conception.

The major medium in which both **Claudia & Julia Müller** (*1964/*1965) work, is drawing. The sisters work in small and large format directly onto the wall. The visual worlds implicit in the drawings are extended into installations by dint of their spatial intervention. The content of their works move almost exclusively in the fields of human triviality and the everyday, however, the pictorial research of real banalities and the naïve image language is somehow continually broken by a sense of the uncanny which the details in themselves transmit. The portrait drawings of **«Choucroute au curry par hasard»** (2000) are created in combination with the same-named recipe book for which the artists made the illustrations. The portraits present people of various places in Switzerland who were approached for the project quite by chance and who contributed recipes.

Christine Borland's (*1965) works are committed to an intellectual curiosity which depends on a quasi scientific and forensic method. The busts created for the work **«L'Homme double»** (1997) were completed under contract by six academically qualified sculptors and show the countenance of the Nazi war criminal Josef Mengele alongside reproductions of two photographic portraits and written descriptions of Auschwitz survivors. In spite of the sculptor's skill the classical busts remain purely surfaces betraying nothing of the psychological structure of Mengele, the human being. The functional wooden plinth, the documents and photographs on the walls emphasise the sober, scientific test arrangement of the work.

Maurizio Cattelan's (*1960) sculptures, installations, actions and performances treat culture, societal political values and moral concepts as well as the art system itself with a quite, direct, immediate irony. The stuffed donkey in the work **«If a Tree Falls in the Forest and There is no One Around it, Does it Make a Sound»** (1999) carries a heavy, old colour TV. A third world beast of burden is loaded with an information transmitter of western technologised and media-dependant culture. As an allegory of stupidity itself, the ass is here also the metaphoric bearer of the symbol for the power and potentials of media – typical of Cattelan is the torpedoing of society by means of a striking advertising strategy.

Urs Fischers (*1973) work method is registered through the incorporation of the most variable artistic styles and media with which he transforms thematically known material of art history such as interiors, still lifes and landscapes into sculptures, installations and collages. Typical of his creations is the playful alienation of everyday and use objects. The installation **«Frozen»** (1998), a still-life like and theatrical staging of an abandoned meal, takes its cue from the art historical genre of "nature morte". Table and chairs – which often crop up in Fischer's oeuvre – are robbed of their function via a system of threads running from the vase and spun into a network. The known scenario is fixed, frozen and through the alienation and eerie absence of the table's guests it maintains an uncanny quality. Fischer translates the traditional genre of painting at once into something eerie and surreal and at the same time, funnily enough, into three dimensionalism. Fischer's picture installation **«More Sweet Feelings, Worries and Other Stuff»** (1998/1999) is a conglomerate of drawings and literary word images which borrow from the language of comics and Pop.

Martin Kippenberger (1953-1997) known for his inflationary artistic production, his postmodern pluralist appropriation of styles and media, provoked with works, swinging between a humorous handling of cultural, socio-political and art historical themes and serious critical reflections. Typical of his works is the incorporation of linguistic elements and so the titles play a prominent role. Kippenberger liked to work with unusual materials and in the two paintings **«Bilder unter Einfluss von Windrichtung I-IV (Nr. III & Nr. IV)» (Pictures under the influence of the wind's direction I-IV)** (1986) feature silicon and lacquer alongside classical oil paint rendering the surfaces differing properties. On another level the pictures play with modernist abstract painting and bourgeois values of taste, the meaning of which is further extended through monosyllabic linguistic statements.

In his painting **Graeme Todd** (*1962) works with the presentation of landscapes in the broadest sense. Alongside the traditional technique of oil on canvas, Todd works, above all, with industrial lacquers, which he puts on in layers as undercoats. His two dimensional compositions construct a tension with the layers of linear and flat elements. The landscape paintings **«Red Mountain»** (2003), **«Pressmännchen»** (2001), **«Heavyland 5: Red Bridge»** (2003) and **«Melly Concentric»** (2003) allow the observer into the complex processes as well as to grasp the whole as well as the details. References can be made to Japanese drawings or ideal landscapes of the 17th century. The game of self-referential, systematic investigations of spatial construction, of material properties of pictures and fantastic landscape motifs give rise to dense reflexions on the illusionist potential of painting.

The artist **Heidi Bucher** (1926-1993) became recognised in the 1970's and 1980's for her latex skinnings to her space architecture. She covered walls and floors with latex which had previously been lined with textiles and then scratched at the latex textile surface and rubbed in mother of pearl pigment, rendering an iridescent exterior as well as donating a new interior life. Bucher who creates out of an entire architecture such three dimensional spatial skins, peels herself through memory loaded houses of her familial past. The work **«Hautraum (Ricks Kinderzimmer, Lindgut Winterthur»** (1987) is the result of such a skinning of an ancestral house in Winterthur. One of the skinned rooms flies through the air by crane. The real space is transformed, delocalised and deprived of its weight. The room skin oscillates between the uncanny and ghostly reminiscences and physically tangible architecture. It is a materialised object of a psychology nurtured by memories, obsessions and dreams.

The works of **Katja Strunz** (*1970) can be situated between a formal constructivism and a romantic idea of Land Art. The work **«Rheingold»** (1998/2004) features an old rowing boat, which is stranded on an abstract construction of glass and wood, mediating the illusion of a lake. Through the simple vocabulary of forms, she hints at abstracted earth landscapes while the boat invokes metaphorical and poetic images.

In **Markus Schinwald's** (*1973) works psychologically loaded spaces and dreamlike scenarios play an important role. Schinwald creates films, photographs and installations which often are accompanied by an atmosphere of the uncanny and unconscious and in which psychologically charged interior worlds are turned outwards. The human is the centre point of contemplation. In the film **«1st Part Conditional»** (2004), a classic Biedermeier apartment and its occupiers, are turned into a psycho-architectonic scene. A female figure, dressed in a grey suit moves in spastic-like motions through the space. An unknown power finally brings the woman to violent collapse. The breakdown appears to just as likely have been brought about by an exterior as well as interior force. In the "off" there are voices rendering literary and scientific texts which bear with them a claustrophobic sense of the uncanny.

!!INFORMATION!

Opening hours: Tues. / Wed. / Fri. Midday–6pm , Thurs. Midday–8pm , Sat./ Sun. 11am–5pm. On 25th May the museum is open from 11am–5pm.

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The migros museum für gegenwartskunst is an institution of the Migros-Kulturprozent.

www.kulturprozent.ch