

PRESS RELEASE

galerie burster berlin

nature morte

Christian August | Alex Feuerstein | Bethan Hughes | Wie-yi T. Lauw | Nina Röder | Finja Sander |
Maria Schumacher | Emil Urbanek | Davide Zucco

Opening Thursday, 7 December 2023, 6 – 9 pm
Exhibition 7 December 2023 – 20 January 2024

The group show *nature morte* at galerie burster berlin shows works by artists from the gallery program as well as guest artists with whom we have already worked this year and combines painting, installation and photography.

In the history of European art tradition, a still life refers to the depiction of inert objects such as flowers, fruit or glasses, whose motifs and composition are selected according to content-related, aesthetic and sometimes symbolically charged aspects. Mostly known from Baroque painting as lavish arrangements, the still life symbolises opulence as well as transience. In the exhibition, however, the French term *nature morte* transcends the mere motif of the still life and develops its own narrative.

In times of ecological crises, in which dystopian images of destroyed natural landscapes penetrate our consciousness, as does the fact that there are hardly any places left – how far away they may be from any civilization – where human traces are not visible or measurable, snapshots of untouched nature can only be understood as utopia.

In this changing awareness of what nature means to us today and in the future, each of the positions shown opens up its own perspective on our paradoxical relationship between human and environment and draws a picture of its own individual awareness of nature and identity.

Christian August's (*1977 in Halle (Saale), Germany, lives in Berlin) abstract worlds of colour glow and bubble, diffuse, organic and alternating between loud and quiet, rough and smooth on the surface of the picture, and seem so ethereal that you want to reach into the picture to try out where the haze of colour ends and the material begins. While his earlier pictorial compositions seem almost weightless, without top or bottom, time or space, and thus evoke associations with an idealised idea of the universe, August has arrived in an intermediate world in his latest atmospheric colour landscapes, which also have something dystopian about them in their impressive colour intensity and spectrum.

Alex Feuerstein (*1981 in Heidelberg, Germany, lives in Güttersbach), on the other hand, combines art-historical references and contemporary perspectives on landscape painting in his *Vulkan* series in a strong, earthy colour palette, in which human influences remain largely invisible.

Bethan Hughes (*1989 in Wigan, UK, lives in Berlin) examines in her works how rubber, an organic substance obtained from dandelions, is linked to the rise of capitalism, imperialism and modernity. In the context of feminism and women's work, she shows the flexible and complex entanglements that unite people, plants, politics and power.

Wie-yi T. Lauw (*1983 in Vienna, Austria, lives in Berlin) explores contemporary life interwoven with unfinished, fragile and fluid identities and their potential for transformation. Her works are testimonies to a personal engagement with existential themes shaped by the Asian diaspora and universal questions such as: What are the anchor points of one's (multicultural) history? What role do memories play as identity-forming instances? What do terms such as cultural heritage and identity mean in the age of the global and digital?

Nina Röder (*1983 in Neuendettelsau, lives in Berlin) is not only a sensitive observer of her environment, for whom reflected concepts and technical perfection in execution are important, but also a connoisseur of theatrical means, which are incorporated into her art in the form of staged settings and performative strategies. A central point of her artistic and ideological reflection is the alienation of modern individuals from their natural conditions and their social circumstances as well as its counterpart: the longing for home and security. (Dr. Kai Uwe Schierz)

Finja Sander (*1996, Hildesheim, Germany, lives in Berlin) chooses the medium of performance as a recurring constant in her work. She searches for breaks and ambivalences in the everyday, for unnoticed automatisms, which she picks out, isolates and brings into new contexts within multi-part processes. Her own body is a source of inspiration, a catalyst, a kind of seismograph. Strategies of staging and exaggerating gestures deepen and stabilise her performative theses. These develop into expansive, site-specific sculptures, installations and accompanying photographic works. The photograph *In der Natur I* shown in the exhibition is part of the multimedia work series *Für Morgen* conceived by Finja Sander, in which the artist continues and further develops her intensive questioning of German remembrance and commemorative culture. (Nikolas Geier)

In her paintings, **Maria Schumacher** (*1983, Bucharest, Romania, lives in Leipzig) deals with the creation of narrative-psychological spaces within which she explores the complexity of relationship structures and, more generally, the fundamental questions of human existence. States such as loneliness, fear, grief, love and sexuality and their universal nature preoccupy her just as much as the use of patterns, ornamental arrangements and the ritualistic charging of signs and symbols. Folkloristic references that can be found in her works have their origins not least in Schumacher's Romanian origins and her involvement with Balkan folk art. Her works create a meditative space that challenges a slowed-down aesthetic perception and at the same time invites the viewer to engage with existential questions of meaning.

Emil Urbanek's (*2000 in Berlin, lives in Berlin) paintings move in a pale pastel colour spectrum. The motifs are reminiscent of still lifes, often filling the picture space almost completely. At the same time, they remain blurred, in an intimate moment of in-between, and their symbolism plays with themes such as identity and transience.

Davide Zucco (*1981 in Belluno, Italy, lives in Berlin) is guided in his work by a strong connection to his surroundings and reflects a historical moment characterised by extreme social and ecological crises. He transforms industrial waste into new forms, objects and shapes that go beyond their original function and explore the connection of different time scales – industrial, geological, botanical and ephemeral – with an immediate socio-cultural context.

For further information please contact Miriam Schwarz: miriam@galerieburster.com

Opening hours: Wednesday – Friday 12 – 6 pm | Saturday 12 – 4 pm and by appointment