

Eglè Otto signiert ihre Kinder

July 3th - August 28th 2021

Eglè Otto – A name that leads astray. A Lithuanian woman's name meets a German man's name; the signature plays with this ambiguity, but instead of a „Mr. Eglè“ one is confronted with a work by „Ms. Otto“. Instead of a unified view of bodies, her art celebrates the multiplicity and malleability of identity. The play on her name and the gender roles it implies is just one of many references to a recurring motif in Otto's art: fluidity.

In the natural sciences, fluidity means a measure of the flow properties or the flow capacity of a substance. In Otto's work, fluidity is found in the alternation between multi-layered identities and thus in the entire range of their pictorial contents. One could say: Eglè Otto, that is many diverse facets. As in a color palette, the individual nuances of her self fan out in the works. There is the experience of having come from Lithuania to Germany as a young girl. There is the accompanying formative loss of language and its new acquisition. There are the simultaneous roles as a woman, an artist and a mother. All these aspects of an existence overlap in her work. Sure, it is abstract painting. But this is not without a biography. And certainly not without the backpack of art history. A look at the painting titled "The Infidel" illustrates this interlocking of the past and the present. The title itself gives a hint of the art-historical reference, which is additionally emphasized by the deliberate play with light and dark. Like the group of figures in Caravaggio's painting of Thomas the Infidel (1602-03), Otto's figures stand out from the background. The Caravaggio reference, however, is most impressively seen in the gesture of the figure on the right, who - similar to the unbelieving Thomas in Jesus - actively touches the body of the left figure, assuring himself of its corporeality. The moment of skepticism is here the starting point for an ambivalent gesture between tenderness and violence, but at the same time also the birth of the figurative in the abstract. In fact, it is only through this testing crossing and interlocking that the colorful color surfaces and interlocking become recognizable as acting figures.

Like bodies, language itself is fluid: one might speak of mountains of flesh and towers of tits, or one might keep it less vulgar and speak of body masses and female sexual characteristics. One can view the whole thing biologically, as skin, hair, and bodily function. Or philosophically, as the changeability of human existence. It can also be discussed in terms of art theory with the two frequently used keywords form and color, abstract and pasty. impasto. The application of color is often the result of several layers of paint, one on top of the other. Otto likes to paint over her canvases, sometimes using both sides for this purpose. The individual layers and stories change the surface and let it become uneven. This gives the canvas almost organic properties; as with aged skin, an accumulation of wrinkles, rough patches and wrinkles, rough spots and small veins. If you turn "The Infidel," for example, you look through a window into the past.

through a window into the past into a studio full of young male artists. This work from This work from his student days illustrates his early engagement with the (male) canon of art history. art history. Even then, Otto seemed influenced by a fluid concept of identity.

Thus she does not place her own signature, but Picasso's signature under the picture and instead of "Les Femmes d'Alger" in the brothel she shows her very own Boys Club in the studio. The artist's position in the present and in (art) history is also the subject of a two-part photographic work entitled "Eglè Otto Signs Her Children," which shows the artist engaged in precisely this activity. As a direct reference to the Italian conceptual artist Piero Manzoni, Otto again makes the power gesture of the signature her own. Otto again adopts the power gesture of the signature, declaring herself the author and thus her children the work of art. Thus, on the one hand, the artist places herself in the tradition of art historical models and, on the other hand, makes it clear that she does not take her place exclusively as an artist, but also as a mother.

as a mother. The pragmatic recycling of old pantyhose, from which the pantyhose that the children have outgrown. A pair of tights that had become too small Otto used a pair of children's pantyhose that had become too small as a painting cloth and eventually - soaked in paint and in paint and pulled over a small canvas - into an exhibition object. "Lagrimas de una madre." the work is called "Lagrimas de una madre", i.e. the crying of a mother, and is an expression and proof of a certain phase in the artist's in the life of the artist.

Eglè Otto's latest series, on the other hand, deals with variations on the same subject over and over again: the side view of a squatting figure wearing a hat. These hatted figures are androgynous and withdrawn in their physicality. Instead, the focus is on a harmless piece of clothing that is also a political issue: the hat, which is more than just protection for the head. As headgear, it symbolizes self-empowerment, but also oppression. The hat and the crouch conceal large parts of the figure, while at the same time, thanks to detailed depictions of strands of hair and textile structures, the sensation of the body becomes the focus of attention. And while one may wonder whether these are really hats, hairlines, or, after all, the tip of a penis, one becomes aware that the symptom of fluidity runs through all of Otto's creative phases, pictorial contents, and formats. Whether painted over several times, reversed, repeated, or even completely new.

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