

→ Herbert Brandl

24/7

23 10 2020 – 24 01 2021

Catalog, Koenig Books

Press preview

20 10 2020, 9:30 a.m.

Press talk

22 10 2020, 1 p.m.

Soft opening

22 10 2020, 3 – 9 p.m.

→ Herbert Brandl, who counts among the most celebrated Austrian contemporary artists, creates atmospheric color spaces through his abstract pictorial worlds. Form, color, and light as material and artistic method are central to his work. In Brandl's abstracted forms, landscapes and natural elements seem to emerge over and over—thus holding his paintings in suspension between the abstract and the figural.

With this kind of abbreviated, standard description of his work, essential parts of Brandl's artistic approach are commonly underappreciated, such as his conceptually grounded as well as broadly diverse media interests, or his preference for inscrutable and thus compelling structures. For beyond his primary format, painting, numerous works in the media of drawing, aquarelle, sculpture, and video have appeared. Brandl thus reveals himself as a "universal" artist, who thinks in terms of installations, beyond the canvas, and who at the same time is aware of the specificity of the respective medium and its materials, while reflecting pertinent contexts and lines of inquiry within his work. What emerges in the end is an intuitive, experienced craftsman, a "real" painter, who has expanded his work following an inner impulse, as well as through conceptual considerations in respect to media and content. His ongoing focus lies in his surroundings and their possible mutations, as a whole pointing towards a sustainable interest in nature, community, and politics.

The focus of his work, however, is always on painting, which Brandl has been pursuing for decades with untiring energy. The simultaneity of different approaches is essential, the paintings are not based on any great appreciation or interest in formal practice. For Brandl, it is about the painting process and the picture itself, whose production requires intuition and reflection, artistic work that is also unsparing towards itself. From the first brushstroke he begins his quest for the solution to the concrete problem at hand—the finished painting.

Anyone who works on a high level over decades like Brandl is constantly confronted with the question of the "Zeitgeist" and continuously changing viewing habits. He is aware that painting is one form of image production among many, which does not make it any easier. What makes a ("good") painting? Brandl confronts these crucial questions like a matador, a bullfighter of painting, who constantly confronts the arena anew. The questions, challenges, and temptations circle around him; he can only restrain them with a red cloth that hides a sword underneath, which brings the material into form, like a small, constantly moving stage curtain that provides a frame for the matador's agile, daring maneuvers. In movement, concept, and color, canvas and brush provide the solution—the bull, the animal within us, surrenders exhausted and satisfied. Afterwards he finds some rest. In the state of relaxation a vague idea emerges, which slowly takes shape in him, to finally look for a new challenge.

It is possible that the really important things happen in these rest periods, in the time of reflection and the superimposition of events, which prefigures and conditions the approach to art and painting. The exhibition "24/7" (Twenty-four/Seven) explores the intermediate in Brandl's work, juxtaposing his last cycle of works from 2020 consisting of 24 monotypes (unique, original prints of a painting) with an earlier cycle of 7 ink works in shades of black from the late 1980s, each of which seems to be painting, but is not – or is it? The presentation of the works, none of which have been shown previously, is displayed in a hanging scheme that plays with the late modern "white cube" architecture of the exhibition building. With "24/7" it becomes clear that Brandl's origins are in 1970s Conceptual Art with its questioning of the concept behind the work, which he continues to draw upon. Behind all of the alleged pictorial power of various realistic or abstract "subjects," and their supposedly clearly legible "pictures" lie phantasmagorias and perceptions that, with not inconsiderable effort, refer to an idea of a painting—which is what constitutes ("good") painting and its "politics."

The exhibition is accompanied by an extensive supporting program that brings lectures by important commentators on Brandl's work to Graz. In addition, a catalog will be published by Koenig Books (London), which will include a large number of illustrations, an extensive text by Robert Fleck, an art historian perspective by Christoph Bruckner and a curatorial statement.

Herbert Brandl (*1959 Graz, lives in Vienna) studied under Herbert Tasquil and Peter Weibel at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna. From 2004 to 2019 Brandl was a professor at the Düsseldorf Art Academy. His works have been shown at the Biennale de Paris (1985), the São Paulo Art Biennale (1989), Documenta IX (1992), Kunsthalle Basel (1999), the Neue Galerie in the Künstlerhaus Graz (2002), Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2009) and the Albertina, Vienna (2011), among others. In 2007 Brandl represented Austria at the Venice Biennale.

Curator: Sandro Droschl

Supporting program

29.10.2020 Peter Pakesch, Lecture
05.11.2020 Günther Holler-Schuster, Lecture
12.11.2020 Thomas Brandl aka Rosenbrot, Concert
26.11.2020 Robert Fleck, Lecture
04.12.2020 Silvie Aigner, Sandro Droschl, Rolf Johannsen, Barbara Steiner, Talk
ORF RadioKulturhaus, Vienna
10.12.2020 Jordan Troeller, Daniela Zyman, Talk
17.12.2020 Sandro Droschl, Barbara Steiner, Curatorial tour²
12.01.2021 Christoph Bruckner, Lecture
21.01.2021 Catalog presentation, Artist talk

Art education

28.10.2020 Students' Day
31.10.2020 Halloween, Creative workshop
07.11.2020 Thomas Kunze, Photography workshop
14.11.2020 Viktorija Rybakova, Convo Club
21.11.2020 Raphaela Malzbauer, Painting workshop
28.11.2020 Mirela Baciak, Convo Club
05.12.2020 Santa Claus, Creative workshop
12.12.2020 Christina Schinagel, Upcycling workshop
23.01.2021 Arty Speed Dating

Catalog

with texts by Robert Fleck, Christoph Bruckner, Sandro Droschl
Koenig Books, London
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Graphic design: Nik Thoenen, Maia Gusberti (Bern/Vienna)
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The ticket for the exhibition is also valid at Kunsthaus Graz.

Kunsthaus Graz
Herbert Brandl. TOMORROW
23.10.2020–07.03.2021
Press tour 22.10.2020, 11:30 a.m.

Press download: <https://www.km-k.at/en/exhibition/herbert-brandl/press/>
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