



Press conference

Tuesday, 1 December 2020
10 am-12 pm

Opening Day:

Tuesday, 1 December 2020
11 am-8 pm

Press material:

tinguely.ch/en/presse-download

**Katja Aufleger. GONE
2 December 2020 – 14 March 2021**

The first solo exhibition in Switzerland by Katja Aufleger (born 1983 in Oldenburg, lives and works in Berlin) brings together works from the past decade: breakable sculptures, hazardous chemicals and video works. With transparent materials such as glass, plastic and coloured liquids, but also immaterial components like sound and movement Aufleger develops fragile installations and films. At first glance, the objects seem familiar and appealing, but on closer inspection it becomes clear that the works are inhabited by uncertain or even dangerous tensions. Using this kind of ambivalences the artist criticises institutions and questions power structures and systems. The exhibition *GONE* will be on view until 14 March 2021 and will be accompanied by a catalogue that provides a comprehensive overview of her work.

Potential destruction

In the main hall at Museum Tinguely, three round-bottomed flasks filled with transparent liquid hang from the ceiling on steel cables. Entitled *NEWTON'S CRADLE* (2013/2020), this work is an oversized version of a desktop toy in which the collisions of five suspended metal balls demonstrate the transfer of kinetic energy. If one were tempted to do the same with Aufleger's glass spheres in the exhibition space, however, the destructive power would be enormous, as the fragile vessels contain the three chemicals needed to make nitroglycerin.

Video works as illustrative models

Whereas here the destruction remains a theoretical possibility, in *LOVE AFFAIR* (2017) glass really does burst. In close-up, the video shows light bulbs against a dark background. The silence is suddenly broken by a loud bang. One after the other, the lamps are destroyed by projectiles. This discharging of tension remains caught in an endless loop, however, oscillating rhythmically between attraction and danger. Both challenging and inviting, Aufleger's art develops its full power when the destructive moment of change – either real or imagined – sets in. In her unpeopled visual worlds, the objects become the desirable other that brings a dark side with it. Aufleger explores the full range of profoundly human and existential questions, from personal relationships through to natural laws. As in life itself, the two sides of the opposites she uses are often imperceptible close to each other.

In her video work *THE GLOW* (2019), we see fishing lures being dragged through swimming pools. Different underwater shots alternate at short intervals, with changing perspectives, surroundings, light conditions and lures. We hear a rhythmic clicking or

clacking, sometimes matching the movements and then out of synch with them. These are excerpts from fishing tutorials in which anglers demonstrate the effect of the lures. The rubber fish become marionettes in an amusing puppet theatre or animated avatars in a digital world. The wobbly videogame aesthetics of these amateurishly produced films against a background of blue-tiled, deserted underwater architecture appears apocalyptic, and at the same time humorous.

Multimedia and conceptual art

In order to materialize her sculptural ideas, Aufleger either uses a video camera or shapes clay with her own hands. But for precise results, she also has her ideas realized by glassblowers or programmers. Loops, grouping and repetition generate cyclic systems with no beginning or end. The artist strips out familiar structures or methods, freeing them of their routine connotations and filling them with new possibilities. In this way, she creates spaces of imagination by repurposing materials in surprising ways.

Aufleger's works critique institutions, question roles and cross borders: curators bring even the most explosive works into the museum, while the audience becomes the most important player in her conceptual games. Her titles are what Marcel Duchamp called the 'added colours', making them an elementary part of her works. They open up a broader horizon and foster associations.

Katja Aufleger at Museum Tinguely

The exhibition is located close to Jean Tinguely's *Mengele-Dance of Death* (1986). Whereas this late work deals openly with death and annihilation, in *GONE* the focus on transience only becomes apparent at second glance. Themes like ephemerality, an awareness of constant change, or the involvement of everyday life and the viewer in fine art offer many parallels with Tinguely's oeuvre. Further works by Aufleger are to be found in the main exhibition hall alongside Tinguely's walk-in installation *Grosse Méta-Maxi-Maxi-Utopia* (1987), in the corridor and on the basement floor, situating her practice within the monographic collection of the Swiss artist who saw permanent change as the only constant. Precisely this tension, the moment before change takes place, is what interests Aufleger most of all. In Aufleger's world, it is only at second glance that one becomes aware of both the fleetingness of a moment and its complexity.

Biographical details

For several years now, Katja Aufleger has been living and working in Berlin. In Hamburg she studied spatial concepts and design at Akademie Mode & Design (AMD) and in 2013 graduated with a masters in sculpture from the University of Fine Arts (HFBK), where her teachers included Andreas Slominski. She is represented by Galerie Conradi (Hamburg) and STAMPA (Basel), where her exhibition "Because It's You" will run alongside her show at Museum Tinguely. Aufleger was part of the artist's group Galerie BRD and has received several awards including the Karl H. Dietze Prize (2012/13) and the Berenberg Prize for Young Art (2013), as well as various grants and residencies. Besides group shows in Europe, she took part in the 6th Beijing International Art Biennale in 2015. In 2020 she is part of the group exhibition 'Studio Berlin' at Berghain, a techno club that was transformed into an exhibition space during the times of Corona in the German capital. The words 'TOMORROW IS THE QUESTION' are emblazoned on the front of the building.

Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by a bilingual catalogue (DE/EN). This first critical study of Katja Aufleger's oeuvre is richly illustrated and offers a theoretical overview and an index of her works to date. Quinn Latimer has written a poetic text about the acoustic and political dimensions of her work, addressing the immaterial side of her art, while the curator Lisa Grenzebach has analysed the artist's strategy between seduction and the pleasure of destruction. The book was designed by Michael Pfisterer and is published by DISTANZ, Berlin. Available at the museum shop and online for 28 CHF, Museum edition (ISBN 978-3-907228-08-1) / 32 Euro, Publisher edition (ISBN 978-3-95476-373-3).

General information about Museum Tinguely:

Title: Katja Aufleger. GONE

Opening day with free entry, 1 December 2020, 11 am-8 pm

Address: Museum Tinguely | Paul Sacher-Anlage 1 | 4002 Basel

Duration: 2 December 2020 – 14 March 2021

Hours of opening: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am-6pm

Website: www.tinguely.ch

Social Media: @museumtinguely | #museumtinguely | #tinguely | #katjaaufleger | #gone |
#followher | #bang

Press contact: Isabelle Beilfuss | T.: +41 61 68 74 608 | email: isabelle.beilfuss@roche.com

Picture caption, page 1: Film still from **Katja Aufleger**, *LOVE AFFAIR*, 2017, video, colour, sound, 22 min.

© Courtesy of the artist; Galerie STAMPA, Basel; Galerie Conradi, Hamburg