

# *Transition*

## Pop-up Exhibitions Ardez

February 13–March 27, 2021

Thursday–Saturday, 3–6 pm or by appointment

In regard to the current Covid-19 regulations by the federal government, please contact the gallery.

*Transition* is the second pop-up exhibition initiated by Galerie Urs Meile Beijing-Lucerne in Ardez, Switzerland. In their private home, the gallery owners show paintings by Zhang Xuerui (\*1979, China), a new series of panel paintings by Mirko Baselgia (\*1982, Switzerland), and - under the title *Minestrone* - works from various phases of our gallery artists. In the former village cheese dairy Marion Baruch (\*1929, Romania) presents objects from the early 1990s in combination with current textile pieces.

### Chascharia, Quadras 52: Marion Baruch

Marion Baruch's lifelong artistic research is characterized by a deep interest in our society and its social structures.

The work *Beautiful* (1988-90 / 2021) from her series of shopping carts is a powerful example for the artist's critical and deep engagement with our consumer society and its mechanisms of seduction. With its overlong legs, the cart itself becomes elegant, almost like a top model, waiting to seduce us to fill its ever hungry "shopping belly" with ever more beautiful products according to the laws of consumption and mass production.

An interest in industrial production combined with conceptual approaches became important aspects of Marion Baruch's work in the late 1970s. From the late 1980s, as a reaction to participation in art fairs and the confrontation with the art market, Marion Baruch founded the label NAME DIFFUSION. Meaning: distributing, sharing with one another as a principle, but not as a dogma. In 1991, NAME DIFFUSION was even registered as a company in the Chamber of Commerce and, as an artists' collective, realized art projects and actions in the business sector. Of course, this is both playing with and criticizing the system, rendering job structures, social classes or market mechanism visible, as well as taking delight in experimentation.

Even today, when Marion Baruch works with fabric remnants from the clothing industry, she is still interested in the social issues behind production processes and their use of resources. Marion Baruch collects, views, mounts, and composes the silk, cotton and synthetic material remnants from the production process of the prêt-à-porter industry located around Milan. How they are selected, composed and hung clearly visualizes the artist's thoughts about language, body, space and emptiness. She likes to work with empty spaces, through views, transparency, omissions. Baruch herself speaks of the "void", although by this she does not mean a spiritual nothingness. Instead, this void is a free space in the literal sense, to be understood as an invitation to the visitors to enter it.

Marion Baruch (\*1929, Timișoara, Romania) lives and works in Gallarate, Italy. She studied art in Bucharest before emigrating to Israel in 1950 where she studied in Jerusalem at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design. Thanks to a scholarship, she went in 1954 to Rome to the Accademia di Belle Arti. Current and recent solo shows at Kunstmuseum Luzern, Lucerne, Switzerland (2020), Le Magasin des Horizons, Grenoble, France (2020) and musée les Abattoirs, Toulouse, France (2020/21). Her works have been collected by numerous public collections including Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich, Switzerland, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome, Italy, Groninger Museum, Groningen, The Netherlands, Kunstmuseum Luzern, Lucerne, Switzerland, Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, Paris, France.

## Chasa Bröl 63: Galerie Urs Meile

### Zhang Xuerui

As far back as the 1920s, Le Corbusier and his friends were saying that a painting is a formula, and Zhang Xuerui's "formula" is made of an orderly grid on the canvas, and gradually shifting colors filled into the units in that grid. She begins by selecting the "three primary colors" of that painting, and places them in three corners of the canvas, which we could call A, B and C. If there are ten squares between A and B, then each square is a different ratio of mixture between the colors A and B, forming a gradual color transition. Her painting process kicks off from a meticulous computation, but the color that ends up in the fourth corner is entirely an "accident", given that her perception of surroundings, emotions or hidden desires play active roles in her entire creative progression, until the fourth corner redeems an intimate harmony between her inner world and outer reality. In her most recent works, she has changed the excessively slow progression. A shift that appears in the picture as relatively strong contrasts in color from one field to the next, or even within a cluster of color fields, in something like a high note suddenly bursting out of a musical movement, creates a sense of motion in the picture. But her basic methodology has not changed. The visual precision brought by the contrast, and the overall elegance and harmony, still stand as the distinctive markers of her work.

Zhang Xuerui's painting represents a paralleled reality, shrouded in a web made of her sense and sensibility. It is like when we sit in a car, turn on the car stereo, and get into the melody of a song, becoming isolated from the swarm of traffic around us, or even the entire urban environment. Our consciousness flows within that sense of time altered by the melody. For Zhang Xuerui, the squares are elements constructing her abstract melody. She has transplanted her emotions onto these squares, steadily realizing that intimate relationship.

Zhang Xuerui (\*1979, Shanxi, China) currently lives and works in Beijing, China. She graduated from Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing in 2004. She has had numerous solo and group shows in China and abroad, including at the Minsheng Art Museum, Beijing, China, Gwangju Museum of Art, Gwangju, Korea, Today Art Museum, Beijing, China and Galerie Urs Meile Beijing-Lucerne. She participated in Artist in Residence program "Kulturkontakt Austria" in Vienna in 2015. Her works have been collected by public collections including White Rabbit Gallery and Cruthers Art Foundation.

### Mirko Baselgia

Mirko Baselgia's squared reliefs on show are part of an ongoing series of works of variable dimensions realized with paper scales of different colours. Moreover, they belong to the many works showing his interest in the issues related to skin, such as *Self-portrait - Reflecting on my inner dragon* (2019), *Little Black* (2019) or *Self-portrait - reflecting the cobalt blue sky* (2019). The skin, in its most diverse forms, is one of the recurring themes in the artist's work, and the origin of this interest lies also in his biography. Since birth, he has had a hereditary skin disease called ichthyosis vulgaris, which causes dry, scaly skin in one or more areas of the body. Ichthyosis vulgaris is often called fish scale disease because the skin lesions resemble fish scales. While reflections about skin generally focus on what delimits and protects an organism from the external environment, in Baselgia's specific case they are all the more an opportunity to identify the possible biographical origins of his disease and at the same time deepen his self-reflections about his own identity.

The abstract reliefs are made of overlapped paper shingles sewn on linen. Scanning electron microscope (SEM) images of butterflies' wings have served as inspiration to create the dynamic compositions. The wings of these fascinating insects are actually covered with minute scales providing a number of functions, which include for example insulation, thermoregulation, and aiding flight. Amongst these functions, the most important one is the large diversity of vivid or indistinct patterns they provide, which help the organism protect itself by camouflage, mimicry, and to seek mates. Reproducing the kind of scales with jagged ends, the reliefs' light paper scales have been sewn onto the canvas creating diagonal lines on the surface, which give dynamism and a certain three-dimensionality to the compositions, effects that can be further enhanced if the scales are exposed to different kinds of air displacements. These movements can even give the impression of a living surface, animated by a gentle breath.

Baselgia's interest in butterflies is also linked to his reflections on biodiversity. In fact, these insects are increasingly being recognised as valuable environmental indicators, both for their rapid and sensitive responses to subtle habitat or climatic changes and as representatives for the diversity and responses of other wildlife. Many studies are therefore investigating and developing the role of butterflies as indicators of the state of biodiversity.

Mirko Baselgia was born in 1982 in Lantsch/Lenz, Switzerland. After an apprenticeship in architecture, he received his Master of Fine Arts degree from the Zurich University of the Arts in 2010. Baselgia has had solo exhibitions at major Swiss institutions, including Bellelay Abbey (2018), the Kunstmuseum Olten (2014-15), and the Bündner Kunstmuseum Chur (2013). He received the Manor Art Prize Chur in 2013 and the Kiefer-Hablitzel Fellowship in 2012. He currently lives and works in Graubünden.

### Minestrone

In the private house of the gallery owner, the exhibition *Minestrone* presents a selection of different works by artists of the gallery:

Ai Weiwei  
Cao Yu  
Michel Comte  
Tanya Goal  
Hu Qingyan  
Ju Ting  
Li Gang  
Anatoly Shuralev  
Rebekka Steiger  
Qiu Shihua  
Shao Fan  
Julia Steiner  
Not Vital  
Wang Xingwei  
Xie Nanxing

## Gallery Statement

Since its establishment in 1992, Galerie Urs Meile has contributed to the presentation and dissemination of contemporary art, from painting and sculpture to photography, installation and video. The gallery is working from two locations: Lucerne (Switzerland) and Beijing (China). While its center of operations is based in Switzerland, the Beijing gallery has established itself as an international meeting place for collectors, curators, artists and aficionados of the arts.

Galerie Urs Meile was one of the first international galleries to focus on the Chinese art scene and has been working on an international level with Chinese artists since 1995. The gallery represents established artists such as Wang Xingwei, Xie Nanxing, Qiu Shihua, Not Vital, Tobias Rehberger (in Asia), as well as emerging artists such as Cao Yu, Chen Fei, Cheng Ran, Li Gang, Zhou Siwei, Hu Qingyan and Julia Steiner.

The opening of Galerie Urs Meile's new space in the 798 Art District in Beijing in May 2017 marks a further stage in the expansion of the gallery's activities. The new space is located in one of 798's historical buildings that once made up the Dashanzi factory complex. The former warehouse has been completely renovated under the guidance of the Japanese architect Mitsunori Sano. On 520 square meters, it contains generous exhibition and reception areas, offices, and storage rooms. Offering perfect conditions for exhibitions and events featuring its diverse roster of contemporary artists, the new venue represents Galerie Urs Meile's commitment to the city's vibrant art scene.

The artist-in-residence program supported and run by Galerie Urs Meile in Beijing offers Western artists the opportunity to work in China for several months and establish a network within the Chinese art scene. In the frame of this cooperation, emerging and established artists present projects that have been specifically made for the Beijing gallery space.

Please note our current exhibitions at Galerie Urs Meile in Lucerne and Beijing:

### GALERIE URS MEILE LUCERNE:

Rebekka Steiger, *des chromosomes dans l'atmosphère*  
February 6–April 24, 2021

### GALERIE URS MEILE BEIJING:

*SNAPSHOT*, Group Exhibition  
March 13–May 2, 2021

We look forward to seeing you at our pop-up exhibition in Ardez, Engadin, Switzerland, or at one of our exhibitions in Lucerne or Beijing.

For more information, please contact us at:

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