

Julia Steiner

across rooms

Exhibition in Lucerne: 13.11.2015 – 16.1.2016

Opening: Friday, November 13, 2015, 6-8 pm

After exhibiting her work twice in Beijing, Galerie Urs Meile is pleased to show Julia Steiner's new works again in Lucerne, for the first time since 2011. The exhibition *across rooms* focuses on works that are concerned with spatial construction and open up a variety of rooms. Besides works on paper Julia Steiner will show reliefs made of plaster of paris, a medium that she is less known to work with.

In her last year's show in Beijing, the central piece was a landscape made of unfired clay and covered with black lacquer, which Steiner shaped over several days in the space, physically exerting herself fully. While every element of the work *asking the ground* was formed by hand and in direct relation to the size of the artist's body and exhibition space, the new plaster works are smaller fragments. They were not modeled, but are casts, and in that sense, the reverse of the hand-sculpted clay landscape. This inversion creates a detailed copy while reinventing shapes and spaces. The result recalls a *fossil*, a mixture of natural and physical imprints, and thus formulates a vague, surreal space located between the poles of interior and exterior. The finest hair, fingerprints, structures of stones or bark become apparent in the glossy, painted plaster, demanding a closer look. The *fossils* are not a physical counterpart, but a kind of microcosm, a copy of an intimate landscape or a relict of real and fictional traces.

The exhibition space also defies clear interpretation, but conveys a sense of the outdoors. The floor is covered with black granite sand and the crunching beneath visitors' feet evokes the feeling of walking on a street or in a park. Steiner creates an uncertain atmosphere with this exhibition set-up. Her exploration of expanse and depth also results in an alternative perspective that leads us to question our everyday perception. *Window reflection*, a wall painting painted over one corner of the room, picks up on the opposite window by providing a view of and opening up a new visual space. At the same time it negates the architectural space, because its illusionary space dissolves the existing corner. Again, Steiner is constructing rooms that have a slight twist and therefore do not conform to our everyday experience.

Works in gouache on paper from three different groups can be seen in this exhibition. *Nocturne* is the darkest series up to this point, and it explores dense, dark, and almost material moods, in which only a little light flashes. Works of the same title, *Windows*, feature openings that allow insight into a deeper level. They play with perspective and their impossibilities, with the notion of the image within an image and the space inside a two-dimensional plane. The series *Tableau* is always in the same format and is a kind of encyclopedia of smaller compositions and formulations, which will be continued in the form of a collection.

Julia Steiner was born in 1982 in Büren zum Hof in Switzerland, and lives and works today in Basel. She received the Swiss Art Awards in 2009, the Manor Kunstpreis in 2011, and the Fontana Gränacher Prize in 2011. Her works were shown in the just-finished group exhibition, *Harmonie und Umbruch*, at Marta Herford in Germany. Solo exhibitions have been held by Haus der Kunst St. Josef, Solothurn (2013), CentrePasquArt, Biel (2011), and the Kunstmuseum Thun (2009), among others.