

# Julia Steiner

circular flight

Exhibition in Lucerne: 5.3.–2.5.2020

Opening: Thursday, March 5,  
5.30–7.30 pm

Galerie Urs Meile is pleased to announce *circular flight*, a solo show featuring the work of artist Julia Steiner (\*1982, lives and works in Basel), at our Lucerne gallery. The exhibit will present Steiner's latest works on paper, objects in bronze, and installative work.

The title *circular flight* refers to themes such as “space and time”, “movement and temporality” and “beginning and end”. These fundamental topics are explored through the body's perception of space. Due to their sheer size alone (drawings that are meters long and wide, such as *system (fence)*, 2019, gouache on paper, 240 x 800 cm), Steiner's works on paper directly address physical feelings, making us aware of them and linking them to sight and movement. In addition, her installations, such as *Der letzte Raum* (The last space) or *flight (weight)*, examine the theme of sensing space, adding the dimension of time to a relationship of space to our bodies and lives.

Walking into the large exhibition space, visitors immediately notice the three bird-like objects from the series *flight (weight)* (2016-2019, bronze, wire, each between 34 x 33 x 20 cm), hanging from a wire so that they float just above the ground. Visitors are invited to set the birds in motion. They twist and turn in the room, until they slow down and return to a standstill. As the birds swing back and forth just above the floor surface, viewers become aware of their own position, making it seem as if the floor beneath their feet is also unsteady. Upon closer inspection you notice that the bronze objects are not perfect casts of bird bodies and their fragmentary or missing parts give them a rough appearance. The bird specimens were cast in bronze using the technique of lost mold; then the specimens were burned, and the resulting hollow form poured out once. Thus, the uncontrollable and the imperfect play important roles here. The artist is especially interested in the relationship between the massive, heavy, metal bodies and the light, ephemeral sense of flight.

Lengthwise on the right-hand wall hangs a drawing called *system (fence)* (2019, gouache on paper, 240 x 800 cm). This piece is part of a four-part composition. Despite its monumental size, Steiner's work on paper—drawn with a rough, dried, boar bristle brush—radiates something fleeting and gentle. Frameless, it spreads out beyond the paper itself to occupy the room. With a kind of fence-like structure, the drawing moves in a regular, yet changing rhythm. In this way the graphic system develops a dynamic, rhythmic tension across the surface.

The installation *Der letzte Raum* (The last room, 2016-2020, installation; gouache, light, fabric, wood, metal, work in progress, 258 x 265 x 165 cm). The artist dreamed of this space as the last space she would occupy before death. The proportions of the room and its interior accessories are related to the body, as well as to the simple activities of sitting, walking, reclining, and looking both inside and out. A bench outside of the room makes it possible for visitors to linger and observe the outside world, while inside, there is a bed, and a wall drawing that opens up new dimensions. For the installation, Steiner has made a 1:2 model of the room and installed it on an elevated level.

On the opposite wall hang drawings from the series *Witterung (Worte)* (Weather [words], 2019, gouache on paper, each 75 x 60 cm). Here, Steiner uses letters for the first time in her work. The letters, however, do not comprise any legible words or meaning. Rather, they are phonetics, signs, and sounds that move and form in the space just before producing meaning or sense: a system that is either forming or dissolving.

The objects on the wall, *circulation (mutual growing)* (2018, bronze, each between 60 x 68 x 23 cm), are branches cast in lost molds. The branches do not continue to grow in a single direction but are made up of various fragments of branches. The different directions are intertwined to create a linear, three-dimensional drawing. Beginning and end cancel each other out in a circulating, counter-rotational motion.

Julia Steiner (\*1982, Büren zum Hof, Switzerland) has had numerous solo and group shows in Switzerland and abroad, including at the Centre Pasquart Biel, Kunstmuseum Thun, Kunstmuseum Bern, Galerie Urs Meile Beijing-Lucerne, He Xiangning Art Museum, Shenzhen, China, Marta Herford, Germany. Her work is on display until July 2020 at the mpk Museum Pfalzgalerie in Kaiserslautern. She realized various site-specific works, e.g., in the abbey church in Bellelay (Jura, Switzerland), University of applied sciences in Basel or at a Facebook branch in Zurich. She has received several awards for her work, including the Swiss Art Award, the Manor Art Prize, and studio stipendiums in Beijing, London, and Mallorca. Her work can also be found in institutional collections in Switzerland (e.g., the art museums of Bern, Biel, and Thun) as well as in private collections around the world.

**Exhibition information:**

*Am Saum des Raumes*, mpk Museum Pfalzgalerie Kaiserslautern, Kaiserslautern, Germany, on display until July 19, 2020. On this occasion an exhibition catalogue will be published.