

HELMHAUS ZÜRICH

After the Game Is Before the Game – Art Made in Zurich

8 December 2012 – 27 January 2013

Anna-Maria Bauer, Frank Bischof, Gabi Deutsch, Mark Divo, Cris Faria, Stella Glitter, Florence Jung, Björn Magnusson, Asia Andrzejka Naveen, PARK (Clarissa Herbst, Mario Marchisella, Dominique Rust, Michael Wolf), David Siefert

This year's closing exhibition at Helmhaus Zürich is devoted, as in 2010, to art made in Zurich: "After the Game Is Before the Game" brings together a wide range of well-known and lesser-known artists, based in Zurich. The artists presented two years ago in the exhibition "Day Breaks When the Night Is Darkest" covered a spectrum between the darkness of anonymity and the bright lights of the art world. In the current show, the two extremes are not day and night but past and future. There is room here for both preliminary stages of artworks as well as process-oriented works that will not be completed by the time the exhibition closes.

There is no singular art scene in Zurich; the city hosts a plurality of art scenes. The traditional Christmas exhibition in various cities in Switzerland represents the attempt to reinforce accessibility and exchange between various groups and generations. A return to year-end exhibitions to be mounted simultaneously in several institutions is currently under discussion. In the meantime, Helmhaus Zürich will continue to present its series of idiosyncratic Christmas exhibitions. Following "Day Breaks When the Night Is Darkest" curated by Michael Hiltbrunner and Simon Maurer, this year's group exhibition "After the Game Is Before the Game", curated by Simon Maurer and Daniel Morgenthaler, juxtaposes artists representing -a number of different scenes and generations – three of them under thirty – in a deliberate clash of creative approaches.

Sepp Herberger's word, which supplied the title of the show, is a truism that not only applies to football. In real life, there are also two ways of viewing the present – from the front and from the back. Nostalgically and progressively. Actually, that may well be the only way the present can truly be grasped for we can essentially preserve and conceive of it only as a reminiscence or as a vision of the future. Even so: after the show closes is before it opens; after the creation is before the idea; after the survey exhibition is before the Christmas show – the variations on Herberger's philosophical statement are legion, even in the daily workings of the art world. A case in point: Gabi Deutsch, who is also represented in the exhibition, based her design of the invitation and the flyer on reversible collages from sports photographs. Although not every fold is on target, as can be seen in the traces on the paper, the outcome is no accident.

The eleven artists on view in "After the Game Is Before the Game" variously interpret the motif suggested by the title. In several cases, the game involved is related to music and sound. Not only does **Stella Glitter** paint well-known musicians; she herself sings and plays the guitar. In her paintings, she does not shy away from moving into painful territory, specifically the precarious balance between economy and ecology. **Frank Bischof**, though also a musician, has made a name for himself primarily in fine art, for instance by transforming a whip (before) into a peace sign (after). **Björn Magnusson** has transported his amplifier into the space of the exhibition. Happily, no instruments are plugged into it because

it is turned on full blast. Is the ear-splitting concert already over or is the big bang yet to come? And in between there lies a realm of latency. Rock 'n' roll, social criticism, minimalism: the three artists pull all the stops: art is a game – a fight – a play fight.

The large, second-floor gallery is devoted to artistic process. **Anna-Maria Bauer** offers an insight into her vast, almost private archive of materials and shows models of her works. Nothing completed is on display. In contrast, **Gabi Deutsch's** large-format wall pieces reflect the process of their making. What looks like a replica of the ground beneath our feet, namely parquet flooring, has actually been built by the artist. In his complex installation, Brazilian **Cris Faria** closely associates before and after, presenting the materials that provide inspiration alongside finished works. This art is about its own evolution – as if you were to look in the mirror and, like Paul Gauguin, ask: Who am I? – Where do I come from? – Where am I going?

Nor can we tell at first sight whether or not the installation mounted by the interdisciplinary group **PARK** is a finished work. The setting is subject to change and the team of four artists will continue to work on it in three performances of “Green Rushing”, a project distantly related to forestry. The young French artist **Florence Jung** takes up acting in her work, for instance, when she invites expensively perfumed peasant women to attend an opening or when she has actors praise or criticize the work of her peers displayed in their Masters Exhibition. Once again a few of the protagonists will carry out a secret operation: the subversive, undercover infiltration of art into the museum.

Finally there are those who hyperbolize social developments between yesterday and tomorrow. On porcelain plates and in several merchandising articles, **Mark Divo** envisions Zurich not merely “Ten Years After” but projected even further into the future. The Prime Tower has already become a ruin (in: “The Prime Tower is here to stay!”), but we also see indications of a nascent, more romantic civilization to come. For **David Siefert**, after censorship is not necessarily before despair. In his project “Censored Dresses”, fashion advertisements censored in a Muslim context have been translated into creations that integrate the elements of censorship. **Asia Andrzejka Naveen's** Living Performances confront viewers with an almost painful amalgamation of art and life. In her study of the social and legal aspects of marriage rituals, she repeatedly gets married herself: after marriage is – so to speak – before marriage. In the course of the Helmhaus exhibition, updated photographs and written documents will bear witness to yet another form of marriage, currently being celebrated by Naveen in Guatemala – with all the official and social consequences. Here, art actively intervenes in social processes, interfering, laying itself bare, anticipating the future, undermining rituals and thus loosening entrenched structures.

After the exhibition is before the exhibition: the truism applies equally to the art world. And so it is the curators' fond wish that the art scenes in Zurich will look a little different after the exhibition than they did before.

Simon Maurer and Daniel Morgenthaler, curators

Events

“Green Rushing”

Three evening performances by the interdisciplinary artists group **PARK** will take place during the exhibition on 13 December 2012, 18 December 2012 and 17 January 2013.

Conversations with Artists

On 20 December 2012, curators Simon Maurer and Daniel Morgenthaler will talk with four of the artists represented in the exhibition – Frank Bischof, Cris Faria, Stella Glitter and Florence Jung – about “Before Life Is After Death”.

Book Launch

On 24 January 2013, the Helmhaus will celebrate the publication of a detailed monograph on Mark Divo, titled *In Bed with Mark Divo* (edition clandestin, Biel). With performative and discursive contributions by Mark Divo, Fritz Billeter, Thomas Haemmerli, Michael Hiltbrunner, Jean-Pierre Hoby, Pastor Leumund and Sonja Neverstop.

Concerts

Once again, two concerts have been organized to accompany the exhibition. Juliana Müller has invited the Duo J & L Defer, who will manufacture music between LoFi and white noise (14 December 2012), and Bit-Tuner, who will entertain listeners with a wild demonstration of urban, electronic music (9 January 2013).

Guided Tours

Tours for adults will be conducted by the curators and the art historian Kristina Gersbach. Special tours have been available for children since June 2012. A character created by artist Yves Netzhammer and pictured on children's invitations guides our youngest visitors through the exhibition along with kindergarten teacher and photographer Andrea Huber.