



**Stadt Zürich**  
Kultur

Helmhaus Zürich  
Limmatquai 31  
8001 Zürich

Tel 044 251 61 77  
Fax 044 261 56 72  
[www.helmhaus.org](http://www.helmhaus.org)

Helmhaus Zürich  
24 September – 14 November 2010

**Klaudia Schifferle:** *sumsum im universum* ("sumsum in the universe")

**Tatjana Gerhard:** *es scheint so* ("it seems that way")

**Two members of two different generations focus in their artistic work on extreme physical and mental states: joy and despair, tenderness and violence, seduction and abuse. Klaudia Schifferle and Tatjana Gerhard, born in Zurich in 1955 and 1974, respectively, live out various identities as artists through their painting and sculpture. It's been a while since we've seen much of Klaudia Schifferle's work, while Tatjana Gerhard has never been so prolifically on show as she is now at Helmhaus Zürich.**

Klaudia Schifferle's *sumsum in the universe* and *it seems that way* by Tatjana Gerhard are bookends, two solo shows that complement and complete one another. There is a fine line between invention and elaboration in the work of both artists, and the parallel worlds they create segue into their "real" lives. Fiction and reality commingle seamlessly; life and art interpenetrate.

Despite the seriousness of their approach, both artists are quite amenable to playfulness and humour in their art. The title of Schifferle's show, for instance, evokes a fabulous creature gliding weightlessly through the universe, while Gerhard's suggests the treacherousness of ostensible certainties. And whether in floating or indicative mode, neither artist will allow herself to be pinned down, both are forever dodging holds and donning masks.

*sumsum in the universe* is the first major solo exhibition of work by **Klaudia Schifferle** in an institutional context since 2004. After restless years on the Zurich scene, international renown as an artist and attention-getting appearances with legendary bands Kleenex and Liliput, in 1988 Schifferle moved away, first to Milan and then, in 1991, to Ticino, where she was able to devote herself to her work in the midst of a lush green spread. Now, since her return to Zurich in 2002, she is in the process of re-inventing herself all over again.

Schifferle paints and draws, sculpts and writes in a studio at the Rote Fabrik in Zurich. The variety of her groups of works created in parallel is astonishing: indeed, it is all but impossible to believe that the pieces on show were all produced by the same person. Their multiple, transmutable nature is at once resolute and vulnerable, courageous and timid, veteran and tiro; ever willing to subject itself, its own feelings, and its interlocutor, whether fabulous chimaera or humble puddle of water, to respectful and unbiased scrutiny. To assimilate into oneself the world's contradictions and its own, nor go to ground in the process, but rather to grasp these opposing forces as an enhancement and an enrichment of oneself, as the multiplication of the possible, and of possibilities.

While Schifferle steers clear of the dark corners where goblins and many-eyed gnomes hang out, **Tatjana Gerhard's** world on the second upper floor of the Helmhaus is a happy hunting ground for some crazy creatures. Her oil paintings are tableaux in which oneiric visions – by turns daydream and nightmare – coalesce into ambiguous primal scenes. At once veiled and unveiled, her figures are

exposed anew amid scenery reminiscent of the theatre. With their innocent earnestness they come dangerously close to comedy, and viewers are unsettled by the equivocal nature of their capacity for reflexion. The infantile merges with the senile, power bleeds into impotence and back to potency, physical and mental forces lock horns; archaic emotionalism, isolation turned inside out: in their inscrutability, Gerhard's pictures place a finger in every one of our open wounds.

Gerhard's art is only rendered more disturbing by its fealty to what we call the normal – which is never fully severed from the abnormal, but separated merely by fluctuating, on occasion almost imperceptible boundaries. Monstrosity lurks behind a brilliant exterior, while perversity is never as horrifying as we might think: for Gerhard's painterly caricatures render it very nearly appealing. One might almost say she gives the monstrous a human face.

Raised in the canton of Valais and with roots in Croatia, the artist currently lives in Dübendorf but is in the process of relocating to Gent in Belgium. The Helmhaus show in Zurich is her first major exhibition in an institutional context.

\*

The Helmhaus is preparing **publications** in tandem with both shows, to appear with the Verlag für moderne Kunst in Nuremberg. Art historian Ludmila Vachtova contributes an essay on Schifferle's current work, while Gerhard's paintings receive their first ever official study in the form of an appreciation by Daniel Morgenthaler. Both publications also contain texts by Simon Maurer, head of Zurich's Helmhaus and curator of both exhibitions. The Schifferle catalogue is to appear in time for the vernissage of her show; Gerhard's will be presented at a special event on 28 October 2010 at 18.30 in the Helmhaus.

As its next events, **Music in the Exhibition**, a concert series organized by Juliana Müller, features two solo performances at the Helmhaus. **Evelinn Trouble**, a major new star in the Swiss musical firmament who has shot into prominence over the past two years and who describes her work as "brutal-epic-groovy", has been the talk of the town since the appearance of her debut album *Arbitrary Act*. Catch the singer and musician's expressive stylings in a performance inspired by Gerhard's pictures on Tuesday, 5 October 2010. Celebrated singer-songwriter, rock musician and seasoned multi-instrumentalist **Adrian Weyermann**, always happy to try something new, has turned his attention to the atmosphere in Schifferle's exhibition and will accompany himself as he performs his urgent and profound songs on Tuesday, 26 October 2010.

**Guided tours and art education events for families** are an opportunity to take greater advantage of the city of Zurich's culture offerings. For detailed information please see the invitations at the reception desk.