Jan Mot now representing Andrea Büttner

BRUSSELS, JAN. 7 – The gallery is delighted to announce the representation of Andrea Büttner (*1972 in Stuttgart, lives and works in Berlin). Andrea connects art history with social or ethical issues, exploring broad-ranging topics such as poverty, labour, community, Catholicism, music, botany and philosophy. Her diverse practice is articulated through formats encompassing print, sculpture, weaving, but also photography, video, instruction pieces, and works with live moss and wet clay. Büttner recently had a solo show at the gallery titled Karmel Dachau and a duo show with Manon de Boer in 2018, a second solo show is planned after the summer this year.

EXHIBITION

23/01–13/03
Opening
23/01, 2–6 pm

Stanley Brouwn

Jan Mot
Petit Sablon / Kleine Zavel 10
1000 Brussels, Belgium
This text is the first part of a short series of contributions to the newspaper by Heiko Goelzer, a friend and a scientist working in climate research. He studies the role of ice sheets in the climate system on various timescales in past, present and future and their contribution to sea-level change. Goelzer’s contributions are written on the occasion of our participation in GALLERIES CURATE: RHE, an international exhibition and project organised by 21 galleries on the occasion of our participation in GALLERIES CURATE: RHE, an international exhibition and project organised by 21 galleries on the theme of water. Please see also our interview with the author in the previous issue of the gallery’s newspaper.

By

Heiko Goelzer

OSLO, JAN. 6 – Our local pond would otherwise be found), it is not only at the root of facilitating the ice-skating experience on natural ice, but pretty much facilitating life itself. A layer of ice on top of a lake reduces the heat loss to the air above it quite considerably, so that the heat is trapped in the water and ice grows much slower than it would otherwise. And the thicker the ice, the better the separation. This insulating effect of a body of water on a lake reduces the coexistence of liquid water and air of several tens of degrees below zero, only separated by a few centimetres of ice, which again can be understood as protecting the life beneath it.

It needs a couple of days well below zero to freeze over a lake thick enough with ice to walk on. The famous speed-skating event Elfstedentocht in the Netherlands is only held when the ice everywhere on the almost 200 km long track on a network of connected canals, rivers and lakes is at least 15 cm thick. This only happened in three of the last 50 winters and the last time in 1997, with a near miss for the Elfstedentocht in 2002. For this event, the ice needs to safely support up to 15000 skaters passing through on that one particular day, hence the strict requirements. More risk-tolerant Nordic Skaters on remote lakes (Ice fishing), who are used to ice breaking from the bottom up, with dire consequences for the plants and animals living there. Whatever the underlying mechanism of such ice anomalies (a completely satisfying scientific explanation has yet to be found), it is not only at the root of facilitating the ice-skating experience on natural ice, but pretty much facilitating life itself. A layer of ice on top of a lake reduces the heat loss to the air above it quite considerably, so that the heat is trapped in the water and ice grows much slower than it would otherwise. And the thicker the ice, the better the separation. This insulating effect of a body of water on a lake reduces the coexistence of liquid water and air of several tens of degrees below zero, only separated by a few centimetres of ice, which again can be understood as protecting the life beneath it.

Stepping out on the ice is a curious and daunting experience. It may feel as solid as rock under your feet, but there is something uncomfortable, a sensation like fear of height when looking into the abyss. Is the fear transferred from the experience of water skiing on a lake, not knowing how to stop in case of an accident? In my imagination, I pictured a huge mouth in the glacier front where the water exits. I once met a group of researchers on the glacier that had just returned from exploring part of the interconnected network of channels. They had ropes and other climbing equipment with them that had allowed them to access the system through a dry moulin similar to the one I had pictured myself being washed down on my first visit to the glacier as a kid. I had mixed feelings about their choice of research method.

It was many years later that I came back to the Morteratsch glacier as part of the annual field trips we did with the research group of my post-doc position in Ellesbu. We would visit the glacier in early fall just before the first winter snow to measure ice velocity, ice thickness and the amount of melt at the surface. The process involves drilling several-meter deep holes in the ice and planting long plastic stakes that freeze in once the water freezes over. Coming back the next year, the new stake positions are used to determine the ice velocity, while the height of the stake above the surface records the amount of ice that has melted. To plant the stakes and find back the ones from the year before, we would walk all over the glacier, and I had plenty of opportunities to revisit the places of my first encounter with the glacier. But even after years of going back, I always spend every day on the glacier, the first steps on the ice were always taken with a certain respect that never went away.

The glacier also holds memories well beyond our own timeline. The snow and everything else that is burtied with it is well preserved in the upper part of the glacier, where the amount of snowfall exceeds the snow melt. Old ice from a glacier can therefore be used to reveal information about the past. The air trapped in small bubbles in the ice can even serve as direct sample of the atmospheric composition at the time of deposition. For very big, old and slow glaciers, such information can be preserved for hundreds of thousands of years back in time. In our case, the glacier flow transports the ice and enclosed material within a few decades to lower elevations where it eventually melts out. On our excursions, we regularly passed the rusted remains of an airplane wreck from World War II and other signs of human presence on the glacier, including the result of what must have been a more recent fatal skiing accident.

Over the seven years I went to visit the glacier, we documented and experienced an accelerating thinning and retreat of the glacier that was clearly visible from year to year. Places on the glacier tongue we had worked on one year were gone the next. Massive meandering meltwater canyons were carved out of the retreating glacier front. And it was getting more and more difficult to access the shrinking ice from the sides over steeping walls of rocks and debris left behind by the retreating glacier. Based on our measurements and related results from other glaciers, one of my colleagues recently projected that the glacier volume of the entire European Alps will be halved by the year 2050. For the Morteratsch glacier, a further retreat of several hundred meters has to be expected. The hundred meters thick ice I had walked over as a child will then be gone, and the path to the other side will instead go along the rocky valley floor.
Each collaboration starts with a dialogue
Conversation with Jochen Meyer

Jochen Meyer: Collaboration is a team effort, working together. As gallerists we are responsible for our artists. I think that this is the most important collaboration that we have because we are often the first partner of the artist: being supportive, being the first who sees the work in the studio, criticizes the work, develops ideas together, helps to realize projects in terms of financial means, content level, production, publication, but also research, writing, collaboration with institutions and so on. Therefore I think that it’s part of our DNA to be collaborative.

And it’s something that I appreciate a lot about being a gallerist. But I am also not a lone fighter, that’s why I decided or naturally developed the gallery together with my partner Thomas (Riegger). I really enjoy working in a partnership as well as working in a team at the gallery. We share a very collaborative, low hierarchy model of working together at the gallery. Each member of the team can grow within the structure, contribute ideas and participate in decision making. I am not so much interested in the idea of being the owner or boss, I am more interested in this institution becoming more open, more fluid and flexible. So collaborating is simply joining forces, bringing together all possible potential to realize ideas and projects.

JW: What is most meaningful for you that you learnt from collaborating?
JM: It’s not surprising when I’d say that we grow and learn from one another. Each collaboration starts with a dialogue, sharing ideas, learning to listen to other people, sometimes being patient, being respectful of other individuals’ opinions, working together. And to learn all that as a participant of collaborations is something that is very meaningful to me.

JW: What do you consider the biggest challenge of working together?
JM: I need to learn to be sometimes more patient towards different opinions or speeds.

JW: Looking back at the past year, the confrontation with the pandemic produced a sense of urgency that became the basis of numerous collaborations. Collaborating is obviously not new in the art world but has this notion evolved over the last year?
JM: I think that collaborations started on a different level with the pandemic because we all felt that it is important to work together to foster the infrastructure of the galleries and this could happen on a local as well as international level because we were all facing similar problems. In Berlin from the beginning of the pandemic we bonded under the roof of the Gallery Weekend, the institution that was established in 2005 consisting of roughly 50 galleries. We managed to bring our infrastructures, knowledge, relationships, networks together in order to help resolve problems like legal issues, how to apply for public support, how to negotiate with the landlord etc. This type of acts of solidarity or efforts happened also in other cities, famously in London, in Los Angeles and led also to activities like the Gallery Platform L.A. Both locally and internationally, amongst galleries that share the same values in a broader sense, we felt that the artworld is an ecosystem that needs to be protected and that there is an interdependence which is far more important than competition. And out of this spirit a lot of things have grown out.

JW: And we needed to be hit by a crisis to come to that...
JM: It seems so indeed. Of course there have been activities, especially more local ones, such as the Gallery Weekend Berlin that I already mentioned which is a very successful collaboration between the Berlin galleries. It was developed from an understanding that galleries in the city can only achieve certain things when they join forces, when they do something where all galleries are at the same level, share the idea of doing exhibitions together and turn the city into kind of a festival. But with the crisis we had a different sensitivity about the ecosystem that we are part of. On the one hand there was the question of surviving the crisis but on the other hand many of us found the ecosystem before the crisis not a very healthy one. The pace for the galleries, artists, even collectors and curators was painful and we as gallerists...
have a voice in that and can produce change.

JW: You are one of the gallerists who initiated Galleries Curate last year. Its first exhibition project entitled RHE has just started and will continue until May with exhibitions around the theme of water at 21 international galleries and presentations online. How do you start such a collabora-
tion, how do you come together?

JMC: We came together before the pandem-
ic as members of the various committees of the Art Basel fairs. In Spring 2020 this group started to exchange ideas on how to deal with the crisis of exhibitions and the ceiling as a result. Later the direction in which it developed was more organic and led to inclusion of additional voices from different areas, cultural contexts, generations and hopefully the project will grow further. It’s been very important also on an emotional level for at least me for the past months to hear how other galleries are holding up, how we can support each other, how we can do things for the better in our ecosystem. It was great to meet every Monday with all those gallerists from around the world and to develop the idea of a collaborative exhibition.

JW: How do you take decisions within Galleries Curate?

JMC: So far our decisions have always been developed out of conversations, in a soft way, and I mean it in a positive sense. There was no voting. Voting can be dif-
cult to understand in this context and it leads to in or out, yes or no. Many of the sugges-
tions of the individual gallerists have been discussed and we found a decision for or against it.

JW: How do you imagine the future of Galleries Curate, what do you expect?

JMC: Wonderful exhibitions! For me the most interesting aspect black and white physical exhibitions. I don’t believe so much in “digital”, especially not as a sales platform, as I believe in really looking out in the art world. We are part of the cul-
tural life and are doing cultural work. We have a very long standing tradition going back to the beginning of the 20th century, especially Jewish, interrupted by the war and the rise of new art forms. There is some uncertainty about raising money or aligning the VAT for art in the EU. It’s also about changing the rep-
resentation of what we are.

JW: As exciting and relevant it sounds also for your gallery, all these collaborations must take a lot of your time. How do you balance it with the work with the artists of the gallery?

JMC: As I said I have a great team and luck-
ily they let me go. It’s an important part of our gallery that it provides this image of being very open to dialogue and cooperation. We also want to bring this quality back into the work on our programme, for instance by referring to one collabora-
tion and we started a few this year. What is the work of a gallerist? It can be a lot of different things. The pandemic offered a very special opportunity to be on tap on a much deeper level for instance with colleagues, we had more time to exchange ideas and to know more about each other and to address for example political issues.

JW: We talked about the ecosystem that is not very healthy which made me think of an illustration I saw, representing an inhab-
ited island and two waves approaching it: a very high one called Covid 19 and behind a much higher one called environmental crisis. I was wondering if at reduc-
ing our environmental impact has been a topic within the collaborations you have been involved in and are there any action plans made?

JMC: The gallery initiatives I know here in Berlin are not addressing it directly. But I have been also talking earlier about how to continue the pace of the art world and that I feel that this pace needs to slow down which implies the environmental question. We need other models. Not only the classical idea of changing the pace of the art world but also more general philosophical questions related to how gallerists or artists we can work on that question. I think that we have ourselves participated in the exploitation of the environment with our activity for instance by participating in fairs in America, Asia. And I don’t know if we can survive and go to Art Basel in Basel or do not visit our artist in Brazil or collectors in New York. So there is some uncertainty about raising money or aligning the VAT for art in the EU. It’s also about changing the rep-
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resentation of what we are.
The performance Ghost Party by Manon de Boer and Latifa Laâbissi as part of the exhibition Risguons-Tout at WIELS, Brussels, originally scheduled in October was postponed. New dates will be communicated soon.

The solo exhibition of Stanley Brouwn at the Art Institute of Chicago, originally opening in February 2021 has been postponed to open in spring of 2023.

Andrea Büttner recently published the book Shame (Koenig Books, 2020) where she discusses definitions and representations of shame, and the historical and contemporary analysis of shame’s aesthetics and power.

Museum Dr. Guislain, Ghent (BE) will present a solo exhibition of Joachim Koester, scheduled to open in March.

David Lamelas’ online performance Time 2020–2021 took place at the moment of transition into the new year in South–Korea in the context of the exhibition Welcome Back at Space ISU, Seoul. A recording of the performance can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hr4rkYIpaCU.

The gallery became a member of the Gallery Climate Coalition (GCC), a non-profit organisation attempting to develop a meaningful and industry-specific response to the growing climate crisis and to facilitate a greener and more sustainable commercial art world.

Agenda

Francis Alÿs
The Location of Lines, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago (US), 29/08–21/02; No Man is an Island, Museum Jüselstein, Jüselstein (NL), 12/09–31/01; Francis Alÿs, Wet feet, dry feet: borders and games, Tai Kwun Center for Heritage & Art, Hong Kong, 28/10–16/02 (solo); Bon Voyage! Travelling in Contemporary Art, Ludwig Forum Aachen, Aachen (DE), 13/11–11/04; OTRXS MUNDXS, Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, 28/11–28/02

Sven Augustijnen
Monoculture. A Recent History, M HKA, Antwerp (BE), 24/09–25/04; Sven Augustijnen: Spectres, VRT NU, 18/12–17/06 (online streaming); Congoville, Middelheim Museum, Antwerp (BE), 29/05–03/10

Pierre Bismuth
Pierre Bismuth. Variazione sul tema delle Nazioni – Italia/Libia as part of Extra Flags, Centro per l’arte contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato (IT), 21/12–ongoing; For Marie. Pierre Bismuth, Iris Bernblum, Nelly Agassi, Den Frie Centre of Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, 05/03–18/04; Democracy Today – Problems of Representation, KINDL, Berlin, 07/03–04/07

Andrea Büttner
Am Ende diese Arbeit, Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig (DE), 07/02–31/01; The Botanical Mind: Art, Mysticism and The Cosmic Tree, Camden Art Centre, London, 24/08–28/02

Manon de Boer
Manon de Boer: Think about Wood, Think about Metal, Tènk, 14/02–15/04 (online streaming); City Trip, CC De Steiger, Menen (BE), 05/12–07/02; Sound and Silence, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn (DE), 27/05–05/09; Oumi. From nothing to something to something else, part 3, MoMeNT, Tongeren (BE), 17/07 (screening)

Rineke Dijkstra
Mother’, Louisiana Museum, Humblebaek (DK), 27/01–30/05

Mario García Torres
Mario Garcia Torres, The Poetic of Return, MARCO, Monterrey (MX), 29/01–tbc (solo)

Dominique Gonzalez-Foraster
Blow up – James Spader par Dominique Gonzalez-Foraster, ARTE TV, 03/11–03/11 (online streaming); Dominique Gonzalez-Foraster, Secession, Vienna, 02/07–05/09 (solo)

Joachim Koester
Joachim Koester. The way out is the way in, Kunsthalle Mainz, Mainz (DE), 27/11–07/03 (solo) (postponed); Cosmos Emma Kunz, Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aargau (CH), 23/01–24/05; Vampiros. La evolución del mito, CaixaForum Zaragoza (ES), 25/02–13/06; Vampiros. La evolución del mito, CaixaForum Sevilla (ES), 08/07–31/10; Permanent collection presentation, ARoS, Aarhus (DK)

David Lamelas
Revisited, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City (US), 19/10–09/05; Collection 1940s–1970s, MoMA New York, New York City (US), 24/10–tbc; David Lamelas, GCAC, Santiago de Compostela (ES), 02/07–03/10 (solo)

Sharon Lockhart
Tino Sehgal
Beethoven bewegt, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna, 29/09–24/01

Philippe Thomas
Zeroes + Ones, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 03/07–19/09

Tris Vonna-Michell
Solitude. Six artistic projects to activate at home, Frans Masereel Centrum, Kasterlee (BE), 29/10–28/02 (online); Tris Vonna-Michell, CAV / Encontros de Fotografia, Coimbra (PT), 23/01–tbc (solo)

Ian Wilson
I am before, I am almost, I am never, Contemporary Art Center Parc Saint-Léger, Pouguès-les-Eaux (FR), 26/09–24/01

Seth Siegelaub / Egress Foundation
The Stichting Egress Foundation Salon, Tilde, Amsterdam, 27/11–14/02

Galleryists or artists we can work on that:

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(advertisement)

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