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## ANDREA BÜTTNER: THE HEART OF RELATIONS

Preview: Saturday, 21 September, 5:00 - 8:00 pm

Exhibition: 25 September - 14 December 2019

Frieze East End Gallery Afternoon, gallery talk by Alison Wright: Sunday 29 September, 2:00 pm

Andrea Büttner's fourth solo exhibition with Hollybush Gardens, 'The Heart of Relations' presents a major new site-specific installation. Referencing Giotto's star-filled blue fresco adorning the vault of the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, Italy, Büttner's installation transforms the gallery's arched ceiling into a painted sky mural populated by life-size potatoes. The exhibition also presents a selection of new sculptures and works on paper.

Büttner has recurrently employed the motif of the potato, taking an interest in its inelegant, plump formal quality. In Van Gogh's *The Potato Eaters* (1885), one of the most well-known art historical appearances of the potato, the peasants are rendered in 'the colour of a really dusty potato', according to the painter, thus forming a metonymic correlation between the potato and the threadbare manual labourers at the dinner table. Büttner's work relates these formal and historical associations to a religious context, transferring what is normally tied to the earthly and the grounded to an elevated position recalling religious frescoes that gesture to the celestial.

A grouping of glass-mounted postcards inquire into the formal expression of religious spaces. Among the structures depicted in the postcards are the stained glass windows designed by John Piper in Coventry Cathedral and the altar fresco mural by Georg Meistermann in the Maria Regina Martyrum in Berlin, works in which formal abstraction and symbolism converge. The postcards also gesture to the relation of devotional spaces to other social functions, including mourning, atoning, and healing. The Maria Regina Martyrum, a Roman Catholic church, is located near the former Plötzensee Prison, which was an execution site under the Nazi regime. The church was constructed in the 1960s to honour those who died resisting the regime and functions as a religious space as well as a tribute and memorial. The postcards come out of Büttner's recent research revolving around the Karmel Heilig Blut Dachau toward forthcoming video projects.

The exhibition also presents new sculptural works modelled after designed spaces. These maquette-like works explore the resonances between art and interior design in secular architectural spaces and fresco painting in chapels and other religious spaces. One sculpture recreates the dining room of Nelson A. Rockefeller's New York City apartment, which featured a commissioned site-specific painted work by the Swiss-American painter Fritz Glarner. Completed in 1963, Glarner's 'Rockerfeller Dining Room' was sold as a piece of art in 1987 and is today held in the collection of Museum Haus Konstruktiv. Rather than recreate the appearance of Glarner's painted work, Büttner's model replaces the interior surfaces with monochrome gouache panels, rendering the structural constituents of the space into abstract formal elements.

A group of four works on paper in this show feature frame-like forms that are themselves circumscribed by the metal frame. The frame-like forms recall Derrida's notion of the 'supplement', defined as an entity that is seemingly a secondary addition from the outside, but which in fact supplies what is missing within the thing which it 'supplements'. These forms bring to mind the glazing bars of stained glass windows—which John Piper referred to as 'splendid discipline'—that serve a structurally necessary function but also as lines delineating form. The works also enter into dialogue with the complex roles attributed to frames in Western art history. For instance, in the medieval period the frame of an altarpiece did not always appear as an enclosure but often imparted the architectural setting of the painted picture and helped to establish the depth of simulated space. Moreover, as art historian Wolfgang Kemp noted in *The Rhetoric of the Frame: Essays on the Boundaries of the Artwork*, frames in this period were often more costly and elaborate than the art they contained and thus key in conveying the preciousness of the altarpiece. Questioning how content is distinguished from the frame, these works extend Büttner's ongoing examination of structures and codes within social and cultural systems.

## Biographies

**Andrea Büttner** (b. 1972, Stuttgart) lives and works in London and Berlin. Her practice connects art history with social or ethical issues, exploring broad-ranging topics such as poverty, work, community, belief, botany, Catholicism, and philosophy. Her work is based on thorough research into specific areas or situations, and is articulated through diverse formats including printmaking, sculpture, painting, weaving, photography, and video. Büttner was shortlisted for the Turner Prize in 2017 and is a winner of the 2009 Max Mara Art Prize for Women. Recent solo exhibitions include *Shepherds and Kings*, Bergen Kunsthall, Norway (2018); *Hammer Projects: Andrea Büttner*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, USA (2017); *Beggars and iPhones*, Kunsthalle Wien, Austria (2015); *Andrea Büttner*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA (2015), *BP Spotlight: Andrea Büttner*, Tate Britain, London, UK (2014); and *Andrea Büttner*, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany (2014). Selected group shows include *On Vulnerability and Doubt*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, Australia (2019); 33rd Bienal de São Paulo (2018); Turner Prize exhibition, Ferens Art Gallery, Hull, UK (2017); *Broken White*, Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven, Netherlands (2016); British Art Show 8, UK touring exhibition (2016); and Documenta 13 (2012). Her work is in the permanent collections of many institutions, including MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate, London; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

**Alison Wright** is Professor in Italian Art in the Department of History of Art at UCL. Before joining UCL she trained at the Courtauld Institute of Art. The research for her first monograph, *The Pollaiuolo Brothers: the Arts of Florence and Rome* (Yale University Press 2005), centred on aspects of production, design and patronage in later fifteenth-century art, with a focus on the interrelation of the arts, disegno, portraiture, and the figure of the goldsmith-painter-sculptor. While an I Tatti Fellow she collaborated on the exhibition *Renaissance Florence: the Art of the 1470s*, (1999-2000). Related projects include the exhibition *Nameless: Anonymous Drawings of 15th- and 16th-Century Italy* (Moray Art Centre, Scotland) and co-authored *With and Without the Medici: Art and Patronage in Tuscany, 1434-94*. Her most recent book, *Frame Work: Honour and Ornament in Italian Renaissance Art* (Yale University Press 2019), examines framing in and around painting, sculpture and related arts in respect to social ritual, artistic change and the production of meaning. Wright has published extensively on relief sculpture and the public situation of statuary (*Art History*, 2011) and she is now studying the transformations of gold in Early Modern art and society.

For press inquiries and further information, please contact [amy@hollybushgardens.co.uk](mailto:amy@hollybushgardens.co.uk).

Gallery Hours: Wednesday - Friday 11 am - 6 pm, Saturday 12 pm - 5 pm, or by appointment.

Additional Frieze Week hours: Sunday 29th September, 12 pm - 6pm; or by appointment.