

ANDREA BÜTTNER

PRIVATE VIEW THURSDAY 16TH OCTOBER 6 - 8.30 PM

EXHIBITION 14TH OCTOBER - 15TH NOVEMBER

Andrea Büttner makes woodcuts, screen prints, glass painting, sculpture, video and performance. She often creates connections between art history and concepts around personal and societal modes of being, with a particular interest in notions of poverty, shame, sexuality, vulnerability and dignity, and the belief systems that underpin them.

For the artist's third solo exhibition at the gallery recent bodies of work made for solo exhibitions at the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff and Museum Ludwig, Cologne in 2014 are brought together to form new relationships.

Moss holds a longstanding fascination for Büttner, and several works here explore this interest. A moss garden, holding many different species of the plant, sits on the floor of the gallery. Under the bed, partly obscured, are some glazed clay sculptures and tuff stones. The moss has been collected and carefully arranged by Ray Tangney, Head of the collection of Lower Plants at National Museum of Wales. To stay alive the mosses are kept moist for the duration of the exhibition.

A C-type photograph, taken on a research trip by Ray Tangney, of moss hangs under the stairs. A digital slide show on a 3-D flatscreen shows slides of a moss collecting society out in the field. Amongst the text pieces on fragile pink paper, there is a definition of mosses. We learn that mosses are classified as 'lower plants' or cryptogams – plants with hidden reproduction. The lowness refers to a (historical) understanding of mosses as lower down on the evolutionary scale. If we move beyond nature versus culture and create interconnections between self and others, including non-human forms, and look at all life as intelligent and self-organising, it is possible to read the reference to lowness as littleness - a way of life where by definition its antithesis perhaps increasingly questionable and unsustainable. Littleness can be seen as a humble mode of being, one frequently absent from the realms of public life, but one also open to conflict; where it is no longer a choice but enforced through poverty, illness and war.

Büttner refers to her glass paintings as her 'little works'. Two drawings by Gwen John have been printed and embedded in paint on the back of glass, one shows three nuns in a church and the other St Thérèse of Lisieux with her sisters. A third glass painting holds a reproduction of Man Ray's gelatine silver print *Dust Breeding* from 1920 that shows Duchamp's *The Large Glass* as it had been left to gather dust for a year.

Also on show is a series of recent screen prints depicting ramps used in everyday situations that facilitate access for wheel-barrows, push chairs and wheelchairs. Different printing techniques such as woodcut, screen prints and off set printing have found themselves at the heart of Andrea Büttner's work, occupying a mobile space that can offer both critical reflexivity, but also used as an immediate medium that communicates an image directly as if lifted and framed from life itself. The ramp is shown to us, given definition and presence on an almost 1:1 scale - used as a ready made, the ramps are displayed serially across one gallery wall. Their replication invite questions around notions of inclusion, but also what is worth representing, what is or can be classified as beautiful, a counter question to art historical discourse.

Moss spreads out horizontally on earth, and a ramp is placed flat. The relationship between ramps and mosses may seem random, but within, there are several connections, paving the way for dialogues with and around things in the world and their social potential. One could say that there is a reaching and a caring gesture in both elements, moss softens ground, and in turn requires tending whilst on show, and a ramp placed over a hole in the road, or access to a building, creates safe and accessible passage.

In the end, these subjects offer concrete objects around which Andrea Büttner can elaborate her enquiry that is both formal and critical, playful and austere.

Major public exhibitions include: Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Tate Britain, London; MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main; MK Gallery, Milton Keynes; Whitechapel Gallery, London. Andrea Büttner has a forthcoming exhibition at the Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis, 2015, and has previously participated in DOCUMENTA 13, 2012, and Sao Paulo Biennale, 2010. In 2010 she was awarded the Max Mara Prize.

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