

Press Information

Exhibition complex II 2022

Exhibitions at a glance

June 25 - Sep. 25, 2022

***that other world, the world of the teapot.
tenderness, a model***

Group exhibition

June 25 - Sep. 25, 2022

Joanna Piotrowska | *Sleeping Throat, Bitter Thirst*

Black and white photography and performance films

June 25, 2022 - May 25, 2023

Diango Hernández | *"Bañistas" (Bathers)*

Large wall piece at Café Tender Buttons

June 25 - Sep. 25, 2022

Shilpa Gupta | *Untitled*

Video installation on the roof

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Group Exhibition

that other world, the world of the teapot. tenderness, a model

June 25 - Sep. 25, 2022

Artists in the exhibition:

Alexander Archipenko, Hans Arp, Lenora de Barros, Hans Bellmer, Renate Bertlmann, Ellen Cantor, Enrico David, Shannon Ebner, Cecilia Edefalk, Joana Escoval, Cerith Wyn Evans, Valie Export, Spencer Finch, Johan Grimonprez, Asta Gröting, Heide Hinrichs, Peter Hujar, Dorothy Iannone, Grethe Jürgens, Nikita Kadan, Arghavan Khosravi, Jakob Lena Knebl, Dominique Knowles, Jutta Koether, Käthe Kollwitz, Maria Lassnig, Fernand Léger, Jochen Lempert, Barbara Levittoux-Świdarska, Yong Xiang Li, Sharon Lockhart, Louise Nevelson, Alice Neel, Kayode Ojo, Daniel Otero Torres, Christodoulos Panayiotou, Ewa Partum, Francis Picabia, Pamela Rosenkranz, Hans Savery II, Francesco Solimena, Friedrich Schröder Sonnenstern, Fabien Vallos, Edmund de Waal

that other world, the world of the teapot, is the world the writer and the **2018 Nobel Prize in Literature Laureate Olga Tokarczuk** is longing for. In her Nobel Lecture, she recalls Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale of a teapot that is broken due to people's clumsiness and carelessness and is immediately discarded and rejected.

Loans of works from Germany and abroad, public and private collections

The group exhibition *that other world, the world of the teapot. tenderness, a model* is **the largest and most comprehensive show in recent history at the Kestner Gesellschaft. Curator** is **Adam Budak, Artistic Director** of Kestner Gesellschaft. With loans of works from Germany and abroad, from public and private collections in Hanover, including the Sprengel Museum Hannover, the Landesmuseum Hannover, the Museum August Kestner, and the Ahlers Collection, the exhibition enters into a dialogue with the community around it about the cultural history of tenderness. In its search for tender narrators, **the show ranges from the idealized nature in 17th century Baroque paintings to Käthe Kollwitz's** political graphics; modernism and the dissolution of bodily forms in painting and sculpture; figuration in the work of **Alexander Archipenko, Hans Arp, Fernand Léger** and **Francis Picabia**; **Alice Neel's** realistic, expressive paintings; **Maria Lassnig's** *Woman Laokoon* (1976); **Renate Bertlmann's** *Zärtlicher Tanz* (1976); and **Dorothy Iannone's** *People* series (1967).

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Cross-generational dialogue on uncertainties of the precarious present

The exhibition features a variety of perspectives leading up to the present, including the AIDS crisis in the 1980s with photographs by **Peter Hujar** such as *Anthony Blond (I)* (1981), works by the conceptual and feminist artists **Ewa Partum** and **Valie Export**, little-known textile nature-related works by **Barbara Levittoux-Świdarska**, and queer imagery from the most recent generation of artists such as **Yong Xiang Li**, **Dominique Knowles**, and **Kayode Ojo**. With the highly topical work *Gazelka* (2015) by the Ukrainian artist **Nikita Kadan** and site-specific installations by **Joana Escoval** and **Jochen Lempert**, the Kestner Gesellschaft opens up a cross-generational dialogue on the uncertainties of the precarious present.

Largest show in recent history of Kestner Gesellschaft – 150 works from 44 artists

The exhibition includes over 150 works by more than 44 historical and contemporary international artists, from the 17th century to the present, and shows numerous new productions from artists like **Enrico David**, **Shannon Ebner**, **Joanna Escoval**, **Heide Hinrichs**, **Jochen Lempert**, **Kayode Ojo** and **Fabien Vallos**.

Nine teapots symbolize departure into other worlds

In addition to the artworks in the exhibition, teapots from different decades are presented, referring to Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale. They show idealistic images of nature with animals, scenes of loneliness and sharing, ideas of a better world through design, the disappearance of the outer form, a view of inner life, the transformation of porcelain into natural forms, and the metamorphosis of the teapot into a space capsule, ready to depart into other worlds.

Searching for a tender narrator in a world of crisis

The exhibition *that other world, the world of the teapot. tenderness, a model* is a search for such a tender narrator. As a manifesto of sorts, it is a portrait of tenderness as a desired, possible *modus operandi* for the world in an ontological crisis and doubt, its emergency alphabet of vulnerability, endurance, and resilience. This is a cross-generational poetic landscape of tenderness as a transgressive, polyphonic tool of change and reinvention, a "spontaneous and disinterested" agent of care and concern, a model for the radical ethics in precarious times of reduced immunity and mistrust. Artworks, assembled within the relational architecture of this exhibition, demonstrate tenderness as a lyrical power with a political charge.



Exhibition

Joanna Piotrowska | Sleeping Throat, Bitter Thirst

June 25 - Sep. 25, 2022

Welcome to the psycho-somatic dome of "Sleeping Throat, Bitter Thirst"! **Joanna Piotrowska works primarily with the media of black-and-white photography and performance film.** The analogue form of the handmade gelatin silver prints and the atmosphere of her 16-mm films evoke the idea of history or memory, the character of a remote time or place.

Works examine gestures and behavior

In her works, Piotrowska stages her protagonists in certain postures and touches in an ambivalent relationship to one another, whose social coding the viewer cannot clearly decode. The images oscillate between closeness and threat, freedom and oppression, protection and danger. They examine gestures and behavior, question social norms, and explore interpersonal relationships.

However, the purpose is not to create a real representation of concretely delineated psychosocial states, but instead to evoke fragments of associations of human states that oscillate in an intermediate space of contradiction.

"I want to evoke scattered associations ... accompanied by contradictory feelings"

"My aim was not to tell a story, but to evoke scattered associations of inertia, violence, or being mentally overwhelmed, but all of this accompanied by contradictory feelings: intimacy, closeness, joy, protection, and tenderness."

The artist creates a strong connotation of a domestic and family dynamic through the selection of the individuals' environments, which feature stereotypical elements such as beds, curtains, carpets, and bookshelves. This also applies to the series *Self-Defence*, which shows young girls performing self-defense poses, mostly in their bedrooms. These photographs were inspired by the artist's reading of the feminist psychologist Carol Gilligan. The works also have an ambivalent effect due to the movement concepts of self-defense, which are shown in isolation in the pictures, in rooms that are actually supposed to connote safety and security. The body language indicates an unwanted and uncomfortable posture. But the particularly disorienting element for the viewer is the fact that there is no counterpart against whom the protagonists are trying to defend themselves. This reinforces the perception in a different, not only socio-psychological legibility and reveals another dimension of physical conflict.

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Intense relationship with something ... outside the frame

Piotrowska comments: "We also don't see what they are defending themselves against. We just see that they're in an intense relationship with something incapacitating, which is outside the frame."

The overwhelmingly beigecolored space of Piotrowska's exhibition in the Kestner Gesellschaft can be understood as the outer skin of this body of artworks on view.

Biography

Joanna Piotrowska (*1985 in Warsaw, Poland) works in London. Piotrowska studied photography at the Royal College of Art in London and the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków. Her work has been shown at the 10th Berlin Biennale and in the group exhibition *Being: New Photography* at MoMA in New York (2018). She has had solo exhibitions at Tate Britain in London, the Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw, the Kunsthalle Basel, and the Rocket Station Island Hombroich, among others. Piotrowska received the Lewis Baltz Research Fund Award and the MACK First Book Award for her work. She is participating in the Venice Biennale and the Lyon Biennale (both 2022).

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Café Mural

Diango Hernandez | „Bañistas“ (Bathers)

June 25, 2022 - May 25, 2023

Diango Hernández's site-specific project, developed for the Kestner Gesellschaft, titled *Bañistas* (bathers), is a tribute to both the artist's personal biography and the memory of his birthplace, as well as the reflection upon the original function of the current building of the Kestner Gesellschaft, which remains in the collective memory as a site of leisure, a swimming pool.

Bañistas consists of a large mural, which depicts the gesture of the wave of water, reflecting the interdependence of the Atlantic Ocean, Havana and Hernández's artistic imagery. Three metal sculptures, composed of the artist's signature style of curved, wave-like shapes and smoothly immersed into Hernández's alphabet of waves, perform an almost somnambulist theatrics of human form, turning the exhibition space into a sun-kissed beach or a well-preserved sports resort.

Instopia: digital objects become real sculptures

The three sculptures are part of a series of works titled *Instopia*. These objects are reminiscences of social activities that primarily come from Instagram. Before they existed in their current form and materials, they were merely digital objects that Hernández copied into photos of real spaces with luxurious interiors. The result is a confusing moment of reality and virtuality.

Hernández notes: "The process starts with me finding a picture of one of these luxurious spaces on Instagram or online. Then I design a virtual artwork. It could be a painting, mural, or sculpture that I think would look perfect in that particular photographed space. Then I digitally place my artwork in the image of the space and post this new image to my Instagram account. The work only becomes *Instopia* when it makes you believe it's real."

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Connecting art with social media

Regarding his installation at the Kestner Gesellschaft, Hernández adds: "What we see in both works, the mural and the three sculptures, is my desire as an artist to connect art with social media and to use that connection to expand the possibilities of dialogue and understanding that such a unique connection could entail. I want this presentation to emulate the digital feeling, to feel unreal, to be closer to the perfection that social platforms like Instagram exude."

In art history, the gesture of the wave and water led to masterpieces by Paul Cézanne, whose painting of bathers – *The Bathers* (1898–1905) – was admired by and inspired many other artists.

Biography

Diango Hernández, born 1970 in Cuba, works between Düsseldorf and Havana. He studied Industrial Design in Havana in the early 1990s, amid the economic crisis triggered by the fall of the Soviet Union, he participated in various collective initiatives as part of the Cuban cultural scene. Amongst Diango Hernández's solo exhibitions are the Kunsthalle Basel (2006), the Neuer Aachener Kunstverein (2007), Museo D'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea (MART) in Rovereto, Italy (2011-12), Marlborough Contemporary, London (2013), Landesgalerie, Linz (2014), the Kunsthalle Münster (2015), the Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen (2016). His works appeared in numerous group exhibitions, including the 51st Venice Biennale, the Biennale of Sydney and the São Paulo Biennial (both in 2006), the Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Siegen (2009) and the Hayward Gallery, London.

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Facade

Shilpa Gupta | Untitled, 2022

June 25 - Sep. 25, 2022

"I am interested in the interpretations that ensue via the play of agency and power – what to edit, mute, and exaggerate, and what to remember and recall."

Shilpa Gupta's (*1976 Mumbai, India) multidisciplinary and often participatory and collaborative practice encompasses sound installations, drawing, sculpture and performance, and reflects on the fragility of one's right to free expression. Investigating collective and individual perception, her artworks question notions of belonging, boundaries and place.

Language and the power of speech are the focus of the artist's attention

Shilpa Gupta's video installation *Untitled* (2022), which was conceived especially for the Kestner Gesellschaft and exhibited on the roof, turns the architecture into a living organism. A video generates letters on 21 LED screens that form poetic messages.

Emitted texts (IT WAS DARK THE, THE LIGHTS, THE LIGHTS TURNED ON, AND MY EYES SHUT) along with visual components, enter into a poetic and political polylogue with the city and its inhabitants, invoking notions of confinement and intimacy, but also legality and illegality, security and censorship, belonging and isolation. Invading public spaces and challenging our perception (THREAT, EAT, TREAT) in a conceptual echo of her numerous flapboards, the works continue to play with the notion of the movement of bodies across spaces and borders. Yet again, Shilpa Gupta reveals herself as a sensitive storyteller, a poet of the everyday human condition.

Passersby on Goseriendeplatz are invited to contemplate messages and images that silently appear and disappear in interrupted sequences, oftentimes in a chaotic order, bringing ambiguous feelings of anxiety and calm, making us pause and reflect on the hectic nature of our life, its poetry and prose.

Biography

Shilpa Gupta lives and works in Mumbai, India, where she studied sculpture at the Sir J. J. School of Fine Arts from 1992 to 1997. As a student, Gupta witnessed the Bombay riots of the early 1990s, which highlighted the internal divides of a post-Partition India. These experiences would inform her later works, which are often collaborative and related to boundaries, signposts, and the labels affixed to people and places.

Shilpa Gupta's works have been shown across Asia, the Americas, Europe, and the U.K. Recent selected solo exhibitions took place at the Barbican Centre in London (2021), Dallas Contemporary (2021), Neuer Berliner Kunstverein in Berlin (2021), MUHKA in Antwerp (2021), Yarat Contemporary Art Center in Baku (2018), KIOSK in Ghent (2017), Kunstnernes Hus in Oslo (2014), and Galleria Continua in San Gimignano (2014). She has participated in group exhibitions at venues including Kunsthalle Praha in Prague (2022), Neon in Athens (2021), the Jameel Arts Centre in Dubai (2021), the Boras Art Biennial in Sweden (2021), the Rubin Museum of Art in New York (2020), the 58th Venice Biennale (2019), the Museum of Modern Art in New York (2018), the Gwangju Biennale (2018), the Art Gallery of the New South Wales in Sydney (2018), and the Edinburgh Art Festival (2018).

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