

HOŠEK CONTEMPORARY

— EST. 2016 —

JULIA BENZ - FLOATING SPHERES

Opening reception: 6th October 2023, 7 - 10 pm

Exhibition period: 6th - 14th October 2023

Julia Benz presents a new site-specific installation that transforms the unique space of Berlin's Hošek Contemporary Gallery into an immersive art experience. Titled Floating Spheres, the artist invites not only to look at the presented objects, but also to see our surroundings and ourselves in a new light.

Visitors become participants in a kind of impromptu performance. Iridescent acrylic panels open up a multi-dimensional image through their different shapes and partial transparency, creating a kaleidoscope of light reflections that permeate the entire space through the incident light. It is as if one were wandering through a painting in which the boundaries between viewer and artwork become blurred. As you move through the space, you yourself become part of the installation and see others merge with it. The view changes constantly and the colors make the visitors dance even when they are standing still. You are taken on a journey where space, light and movement come together in a fascinating interplay.

Perspective, graduation and the choice of geometric shapes are classic means of painting, which dissolve here in a site specific installation, can be easily and playfully walked. They test boundaries for their flexibility - a further development of the new series of Julia Benz's works on canvas, which has already elevated these very reflections from pure painting to objects. Areas of color lie at our feet, streaking across walls and gifting the chosen space with a composition that never repeats itself. Despite the sometimes powdery hues, the effect is not quiet, but powerful and reflects not least the artist herself. Her passion for colors, shapes and playing with the senses permeate every aspect of this installation, giving it a unique mood.

Julia Benz encourages us to reinterpret space and dimensions and to overcome the limits of our own perception: With her installation she leaves the usual boundaries of the two-dimensionality of painting and creates a formative experience for the audience. The play of light on the gently moving panels and the positions of the viewers moving steadily through the space creates a dynamic art experience that challenges our senses. It is an invitation to see and experience the world around us in a whole new way.

About the artist

Within her artistic work, Julia Benz explores the aesthetic and medial possibilities of painting. Seeking for the multi-dimensionality of the medium and its effect, the artist develops a distinctive visual language that moves beyond the boundaries of the canvas. Suspenseful and complex worlds, characterised by wide-ranging dynamics, colourful strength and compositional finesse, invite the viewer into an abstract cosmos, stimulate their associations and question their own patterns of perception.

The artist's diverse oeuvre ranges from works on paper to wall paintings and wall installations to site-specific installations in private as well as public spaces, e.g. for the Goethe-Institut in Helsinki, Finland, in Bangkok, Thailand and in Fortaleza, Brazil or for the Canadian Embassy in Khartoum, Sudan.

Through the reciprocal play between the pictorial and the viewer's interior space, Benz's artworks and installations create synergetic relationships between the surrounding architectural environment, the lighting situation, the recipient's own movements and the art, nourished by the interactive potential of these components. Following her examination of formal-aesthetic and conceptual questions on painting, the artist develops new ways to expand the expression of the medium and experiments with different materialities, e.g. iridescent materials, glass and dichroic foils. In the combination of painterly gesture and geometric form, the various artistic means become intertwined creating a network of visual impressions. By her unique artistic expression, Julia Benz represents the painting of an aspiring generation. She consistently distances herself from theoretical constructs and strict formal parameters in the art world. Instead, she advocates a new striving for artistic freedom and paves her way to a self-determined, painterly language.

Julia Benz studied free painting at the Düsseldorf Art Academy and at the Berlin University of the Arts and graduated as a master student in painting. She lives and works in Heidelberg and Berlin.

Hošek Contemporary

Established by Petr Hošek in 2016, Hošek Contemporary is a gallery and art residency located on a historical cargo ship next to Fischerinsel in Mitte, Berlin. The gallery focuses primarily on site-specific pieces, performing arts and experimental sound works. During the spring and summer months, the gallery is hosting weekly improvised and experimental music installations, with local and international musicians.

MS Heimatland

Built in 1910 in Fürstenberg an der Oder, MS Heimatland was initially operating under the name Ida and used for transporting coal to Charlottenburg. After the Second World War, the 58-meter long cargo ship was renamed Heimatland, meaning "homeland". Until the 90s, the ship was sailing on Elbe and Havel, moving other boats, sand and chipping. It served for artistic and cultural purposes for the first time in 2002, when German sculptor Christiane Möbus chose it for her Nackte Tatsache Tatsache project. Finally, in March 2018, Heimatland became the main exhibition space and artist residency of Hošek Contemporary. The boat is permanently anchored in the historic port of Berlin.

The exhibition is sponsored by ArsVersa Kunst-Stiftung, Freiburg / Germany (www.arsversa.de).



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