

Peter Klein

Blumen blühen, wo bist du?

der TANK, Basel

Curated by Chus Martínez
Curatorial assistance Marion Ritzmann

10 – 19 June 2022

Wednesday 15 June 2022, 6 pm

Opening with welcome words by Chus Martínez

Book release *LIKE THIS. Natural Intelligence As Seen by Art*, specially commissioned works for der TANK 2016 – 2021 supported by [N.A!] Project; in collaboration with Hatje Cantz

Followed by CIVIC Bar (former foyer @HGK)

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Every year, coinciding with Art Basel we present a special project at der TANK, the exhibition space of the Institute Art Gender Nature at the FHNW Academy of Art and Design in Basel. This year's exhibition reunites around thirty paintings by Peter Klein. *Blumen blühen, wo bist du?* constitutes Klein's first institutional exhibition in Switzerland and one of his first shows in many years. The works represent two families of works—homes and flowers—he did in the 1970s and 1980s, before he arrived in Ernen, Valais, in Switzerland.

Both, his biography—born as a German in Romania, educated in Bucharest and Munich, and in “exile” since the 1980s in Switzerland—and the subject matter of his work seem especially relevant today. Borders that do not necessarily overlap with the identities of the inhabitants of a place, cultural shifts and aesthetic research constitute the basis of a deeply moving artistic production. Also displacement is to blame for his almost invisible presence in the exhibition programs. Peter Klein rooted his life and his practice in a small community in the mountains of Switzerland where he has been active as an artist and as an art teacher but not necessarily seeking for being part of exhibition programs in the Swiss centers. For this reason, this presentation constitutes a unique opportunity to discover his work but also to be the witness of a way of believing in the rural that has been so present in our conversations since the Covid-19 pandemic.

Peter Klein's artistic language is simple. His work shows a strong believe in form and composition and the two main tools to structure an image. Pigment, then, reinforces the message that we normally project on to the canvas. Color means mood. Form means structure. A structure that refers to the self, to the possibility of standing, to the question of being taken care, being hosted. Home may be a flower and the house may be a burden. Inverted forms, inverted proportions refer to the need of revisiting all the categories and notions of belonging that, over centuries, have been imposed into us. Us as individuals and us as communities that share certain believes that hold us together. What if all we believe disappears? We know this is the reality of many millions of individuals that see how their homes vanished but also experience the difficulties of being taking into another community's dreams.

The presentation and the selection of the work has been possible thanks to the very active help of Peter Klein's son, Emil Michael Klein.

Chus Martínez

Peter Klein was born in 1953 in Schässburg / Sighișoara in Romania and moved to Bucharest in 1968. There he attended the Institutul de Arte Plastice Nicolae Grigorescu. In 1973 he emigrated with his sister and parents to West Germany. He studied painting with Günter Fruhtrunk at the Academy of Fine Arts Munich and graduated as "Meisterschüler". Subsequently, he completed a pedagogical training with a focus on psychology and philosophy. In 1984 Peter Klein moved to Switzerland with his wife Ursula Klein. They settled in the Valais mountain village of Ernen in 1990 with their children Lena, Flora and Emil Michael Klein, where Peter Klein continued his artistic work until he went blind in 2019.

In the late 1980s, Peter Klein was head of the painting studio at the Stadttheater in Bern, where he trained theater painters. During his time in Valais, he was a teacher of design and art at the St. Ursula Mittelschule in Brig.

Peter Klein exhibited his works rarely, the few exceptions took place in Kassel in the 1980s and in 2014 together with Flora and Emil Michael Klein in the Kunstverein Oberwallis, among others. *Blumen blühen, wo bist du?* at der TANK is his first institutional solo exhibition in Switzerland.

Opening hours

Friday 6 – 8 pm, Saturday and Sunday, 2 – 6 pm

During Art Basel: Wednesday to Sunday, 2 – 7 pm

And by appointment: dertank.hgk@fhnw.ch

der TANK

Campus der Künste, Freilager-Platz 1, Basel

Tram 11, Station Freilager

Additional information

dertank.space

Press contact

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