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jevouspropose#6
unbeschreiblich weiblich

For jevouspropose#6 Susanna Koeberle (freelance journalist) proposes Elisabeth Kübler, former gallery owner Maeght (later Lelong) Zurich.

„Zorn und Zärtlichkeit“ ("Anger and Tenderness"): Elisabeth Kübler, then director of the Maeght Gallery in Zurich, showed the works of five artists who were largely unknown at the time under this title in 1980. For an established and internationally active gallery, this was a venture. For Elisabeth Kübler "courant normal": art should also provoke. And with a pure women's exhibition, she did so quite consciously. However, there were concerns about this, also on the part of the artists invited. But: "We need the reservations, we shouldn't approach such a thing without reservations," she wrote to the five artists Annalies Klophaus, Ingeborg Lüscher, Annette Messenger, Anna Oppermann and Friederike Pezold in the summer of 1979. The planned exhibition should not function according to a "patriarchal scheme," she continued. So no hierarchical structures, no single authority and authorship, but rather reflecting diversity! She wanted to develop the exhibition in collaboration with (!) the artists. This may seem self-evident, but in many cases it has not yet been so. And certainly not at that time, which made this exhibition even more of a statement.

Plurality - "utopias, pluralism," as Elisabeth Kübler puts it in her letter to the five artists - is already evident on the cover of the catalogue to the exhibition „Zorn und Zärtlichkeit": the bodies of the five women, photographed sitting from behind, overlap, quasi merge into a single body. To a single organism that draws its "completeness" (also a word from Elisabeth's letter) from its multiplicity. This is also the subversiveness of this project: to celebrate this multiplicity as a force, as an artistic strategy with which existing structures can be undermined.

Now this may sound like a weakening of the individual positions, like a uniform mush that diminishes the individual achievements of the five artists. That was by no means the case! The works of Annalies Klophaus, Ingeborg Lüscher, Annette Messenger, Anna Oppermann and Friederike Pezold represented mature and precise contributions which were all of a very different nature. But it was precisely in the opposite pair of "Anger and Tenderness" that the common artistic and human attitude manifested itself. The curiosity and openness towards each other's work can also be seen when one looks at the pictures of the preparatory meetings and the construction work. There is sympathy, exchange and joie de vivre to be felt. Something fun and playful.

Such vitality is also reflected in the "Zauberfotos" ("Magician Photos") by Ingeborg Lüscher, portraits of the artists and the gallery owner that were created at that time. But also in the exhibited works, which tell of the suspension between subject and object (Anna Oppermann), of "art as a human approximation, as a feeling of vibration" (Annalies Klophaus), of a "suspension of the distribution of roles" (Friederike Pezold) or of "identity in diversity" (Annette Messenger). In this respect, I would like to speak of a rootless radicality, of a mutual creative contamination, freely adapted from Deleuze-Guattari, whose book "Mille Plateaux" also appeared in 1980. This artistic language is not one that designates and names, but one that leaves meaning in limbo. It also does not treat the body as a clearly defined object, but dissolves it as an entity. "I is another" (Arthur Rimbaud). Or: "unbeschreiblich weiblich" ("indescribably feminine") (Nina Hagen).

To spin on this "indescribably feminine" was also the intention in the selection of the other works shown in the current exhibition. They all come from Elisabeth Kübler's private collection and reflect her passion for art; they bear witness to friendships and encounters. The unifying theme of the selected works is the female body, whereby positions of men are deliberately included. These reflect the fascination of male artists for the female body beyond appropriation and power gaps. Rather, the "feminine" acts as an opening on pictorial spaces that function beyond binary assignments. In these works, bodies (and thus identities) always take place in the plural. As a plurality that cannot be traced back to individual parts, even if we here sometimes only see parts of bodies or the works are named after a body part. A breast (Heidi Bucher), a braid (Jim Dine), feet (Louise Bourgeois) or "Belly" also by Louise Bourgeois. Sometimes the "feminine" also appears as a hybrid. In Jacques Prévert as a wondrous hybrid of animal and woman. Or in Pierre Klossowski's work, where the naked protagonist of the picture, Roberte, grows out of the vulva a phallus-like being (or does she give birth to it?). Is Roberte now a victim of the male gaze? Or is she rather an actor, a creator of a new order?

How can identity be defined? Is there even an identity beyond the body? The images do not provide any answers, but delightfully represent the possibility of a new point of view. "The movement of my belly button by only a few milli-milli-meters is more exciting than any crime thriller," says Friederike Pezold to her film project "Toilette," which was part of the exhibition "Anger and Tenderness". The artists were concerned with pointing out alternatives. Or to use Elisabeth Kübler's words: "HAPPY SUBVERSIVELY!"

Susanna Koeberle

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Susanna Koeberle (*1967) is a freelance journalist who writes on design, art and architecture for various Swiss media (such as NZZ, Z Magazin, Hochparterre, Das Magazin, Swiss-Architects and Das Ideale Heim). She studied German literature, comparative literature, philosophy and art history in Zurich and Paris. Growing up multilingual, she feels at home in different worlds and geographical zones. Her special interest lies in the intersections of and a dialogue between different disciplines.

Elisabeth Kübler

Elisabeth Kübler is the former gallerist of the well-known Galerie Maeght (later Lelong) in Zurich.

In 1970 the Galerie Maeght from Paris opened a gallery branch in Zurich, which Elisabeth Kübler first ran with her husband Jörn Kübler and after his death in 1975 alone until 1993. At Galerie Maeght Zurich - renamed Galerie Lelong in 1987 - Elisabeth Kübler was responsible for conceiving the exhibitions and designing the catalogues. Together with the mother gallery in Paris and the representation in New York, she also organized exhibitions in museums and galleries with works by internationally renowned artists represented by the gallery, such as Alexander Calder, Eduardo Chillida, Joan Miró and Antoni Tàpies.

In addition, Elisabeth Kübler exhibited artists at an early stage who were still largely unknown at the time, such as Heidi Bucher in 1977. In 1980, Elisabeth Kübler showed a pure women artists exhibition entitled "Zorn und Zärtlichkeit" ("Anger and Tenderness") with Annalies Klophaus, Ingeborg Lüscher, Annette Messenger, Anna Oppermann and Friederike Pezold. She was also the first gallerist to exhibit the works of Louise Bourgeois in Europe in 1985, which after the retrospective in 1982 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York were only known in America and thus contributed to their growing distribution.

Before that, Elisabeth Kübler studied at the Bühnenstudio Zurich from 1951 to 1953, then worked at various theatres (1953 Bienne/Solothurn, 1954-56 Landestheater Hannover, 1956-59 Schauspielhaus Zurich).

From 1959 to 1969 she travelled around with the "Circus Knie". She made friends with artists, poets, photographers, museum people and journalists.

jevouspropose

jevouspropose is a curatorial series by Sabina Kohler and accomplices.

Several times a year, *jevouspropose* invites a personality to propose an artist with a specific group of works. The works will be installed in the space of *jevouspropose*, celebrated with an opening and remain on view for a while. At the same time, the respective presentation is expanded and continued in virtual space: the proposer and the artist will have a chat, a visual ping-pong on the works and themes on display ([instagram.com/je_vous_propose](https://www.instagram.com/je_vous_propose))

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