

via a. stradella 7

silvia bächli

verso

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Drawing is the protagonist and common thread between the three solo shows by Silvia Bächli, Jessica Stockholder, and Allyson Strafella on view at Galleria Raffaella Cortese from May 20, 2021. Each artist has developed their own drawing practice differently, but with the shared desires to cross the boundaries of the sheet of paper, as well as overcome the limits of the frame and of the two-dimensional surface. The medium, in all three exhibitions, takes on a dimension of installation and expresses a desire for osmosis with the spaces it inhabits.

After decades of drafting her vision of the world on white sheets of paper of recurring sizes, testing their edges and their surfaces, Silvia Bächli has constructed a vocabulary of brushstrokes that have explored infinite degrees of the black and white and which have entered the world of the specificity of color.

While the signs on the wall have always mattered as much as the blank spaces, for this exhibition Bächli investigates even further the surface of the wall that contains her language: for the first time at the gallery, and one of the very first ones in her practice, her drawings float freely, outside of their frames, in new compositions.

Lines and larger fields of colors seem to trespass the dimensions of the drawings and merge with the white wall. Her drawings are actions, her lines tell stories. What happens when these meet? What words can describe these encounters? What musical scores could they compose?

As visitors walk in the space, they are invited to reconstruct it as they walk along and manage to look at the details of the strokes.

“My ideal visitor, if he had chalk on the soles of his shoes” — says Silvia Bächli — “would define the space of the floor by drawing across the room, as in ice skating, curves and arches, approaching a detail, spinning and then backing away and re-establishing an overall view of the wall, letting his eyes wander, again and again, further and further away.”¹

The choreography that Bächli imagines exists only in the space, which is not only inhabited, but is newly drawn by the lines and surfaces on paper.

1 Bächli, Silvia. “Further. Becomes.” *Silvia Bächli: Brombeeren*, edited by Michael Semff, Cologne, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2014. Exhibition catalogue, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich.

galleria raffaella cortese

The long red lines running horizontally on the frontal wall, through sheets of paper, lead through drawings that are intense spectrums of bright greens, light blues and warm earth tones and then again towards objects that occupy a different kind of physical space.

Five sculptures, small angular plaster objects, cut along straight lines, lay on a table of light-colored wood and stand as outlines of human heads. They are part of Bächli's most recent production and were firstly exhibited in her solo exhibition at Kunsthalle Karlsruhe in 2019: composed of flat, porous surfaces, whose imperfect conjunctions contain the fields of colors, they recall the very same palettes that occupy the walls, and present the very same painterly qualities they own on paper.

BIOGRAPHY

Silvia Bächli was born in Baden, Switzerland, in 1956. She lives and works in Basel.

Bächli has developed her drawing practice working on sheets of white paper of different sizes, qualities and tones, using Indian ink, charcoal, gouache or pastels. Using the body and its movements as a starting point, her work spreads into everything that can be considered part of the realm of feeling. In this way she presents a reality made up of fragments and impressions. The result is not just painterly moments: the drawings often seem to capture, as if in film stills, a cinematic way of looking at bodies and things or their details, at landscapes, gestures, structures, and processes. Her works tell stories without an actual beginning or end, just a visualization of a moment captured in time.

Important solo exhibitions have been dedicated to her, including: *Interstices*, LaBF15, Lyon (2021); *Shift*, Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (2019); *Situer la différence*, Centre culturel suisse, Paris (2017, with Eric Hattan); *weiter.wird.Les abords*, Frac Franche-Comté, Besançon (2015); *Brombeeren*, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2014); *Far apart - close together*, Kunstmuseum St.Gallen (2012). Silvia Bächli has been included in a number of group shows, including: *Resonating Spaces*, Fondation Beyeler, Basel (2019); *Mask: In Present-Day Art*, Aargauer Kunsthau, Aarau (2019); *To have a shelf live*, Eric Hattan & Silvia Bächli, Art Basel | Parcours (2018); *Drawing Now*, Albertina, Vienna (2015); *Biens communs I, acquisitions récentes*, Mamco, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Geneva (2011); *elles@centrepompidou, artistes femmes dans les collections du Centre Pompidou*, Centre Pompidou, Paris (2010). She represented Switzerland at the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009). Bächli's works are featured in numerous major collections including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Kunstmuseum, Basel; Kunstmuseum St.Gallen; Staatliche Graphische Sammlung and Neue Pinakothek, Munich; Mamco, Geneva; The Art Institute of Chicago.