

EN

MERET'S SPARKS

MERET OPPENHEIM

MAYA BRINGOLF
VIDYA GASTALDON
TATJANA GERHARD
ELISABETH LLACH
FRANCISCO SIERRA

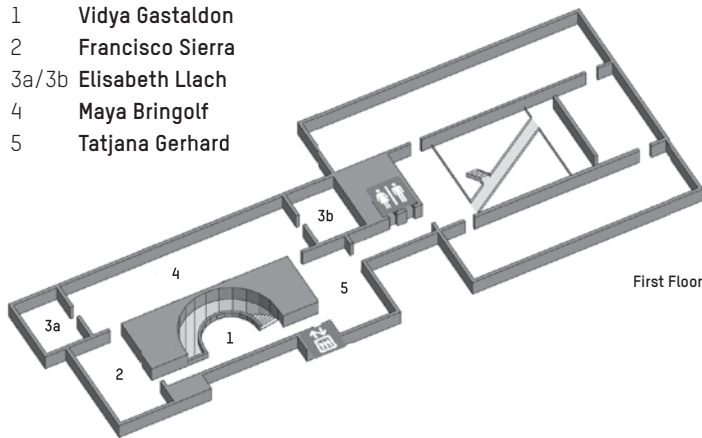
SURREALISMS IN
CONTEMPORARY
SWISS ART

19.10.2012 – 10.02.2013

KUNST
MUSEUM
BERN

EXHIBITION GUIDE

Floorplan



If not noted otherwise Meret Oppenheim's works are from the collection of the Kunstmuseum Bern

Introduction

The outstanding Swiss female artist and poet Meret Oppenheim, who was born 1913 in Berlin and died 1985 in Basle, would have celebrated her one-hundredth birthday next year. All the more reason to again engage with the collection of her works at the Kunstmuseum Bern. However, our current exhibition project, *Meret's Sparks*, traces the paths inspired by Meret Oppenheim's art and thought, investigating the relevance of her work for Swiss art today. Have her ideas about art been accepted in the meantime so that this trail-blazing artist is no longer an outsider? In order to find the answers to this question, the exhibition *Meret's Sparks* juxtaposes a selection of Meret Oppenheim's artworks with the art of current generation artists. In doing so the Kunstmuseum Bern hopes to prove that Meret Oppenheim's art is indeed highly relevant today and that her artistic legacy lives on with an enduring vitality.

Studying Meret Oppenheim's work means confrontation with a fascinating person and highly profound artworks. By doing so we soon discover an early manifestation of the distinctive facets we expect in contemporary art: an interdisciplinary approach, thematic and formal diversity, a broad spectrum of techniques and materials used. One of the remarkable characteristics of her art was that she was constantly open to exploring new avenues of visual language. And another is that she remained true to herself throughout rather than dedicated to a specific style or movement. Her intellectual and artistic versatility and self-determination are still seen as trail-blazing, even though she never sought to be a role model.

The further participants in the exhibition are Swiss artists whose

Meret Oppenheim: Biography

work at least verges on the surreal because it engages with the absurd, the irrational, and the oneiric. Maya Bringolf, Vidya Gastaldon, Tatjana Gerhard, Elisabeth Llach, and Francisco Sierra could almost be Meret Oppenheim's grandchildren—and still use the same media and materials as well as adopt similar motifs and subject matter as their great predecessor. They address realities that deviate from what is visible in the everyday, honing in on the spiritual, on contemporary man's relation to nature, on the issue of creativity and its sources, on identification processes, and processing psychological urges that can neither be explained logically nor by conventional means. Their diverse repertoire of motifs and exceptional variation of ambience also reminds of their precursor: They range from naive and childlike to erotic, unfathomable, and ominous representations. New installations were made especially for the exhibition and occupy a total of six museum rooms. Young artists mount their art with selected works by Meret Oppenheim from our collection and a few loans. In this way they generate a dialogue between a «classic» artist—whose oeuvre guarantees multifaceted reception—and the present, and bring the early avant-garde and contemporary works together in new contexts.

- 1913 Born October 6 in Berlin in the district of Charlottenburg. In her youth she lived in Basle and Delémont, in Steinen in the south of Germany, and in Carona (Ticino).
- 1932 Meret Oppenheim decided to become a painter and moved to Paris.
- 1933 Received her first invitation to exhibit with the surrealists. Man Ray photographed her, making series of nude shots.
- 1936 *Déjeuner en fourrure (Fur Cup)* became an icon of surrealism.
- 1937 A long crisis began.
- 1938 She attended the Allgemeine Gewerbeschule (vocational school) in Basle until 1939. There she studied art conservation and restoration.
- 1939 Meret Oppenheim left Paris to settle down in Basle.
- 1945 She met Wolfgang La Roche, and they married four years later. They moved together to Bern.
- 1954 Her crisis came to an end and she rented a studio in Bern.
- 1959 She organized a spring celebration where the guests were to eat the food from the body of a naked woman.
- 1967 A retrospective of her work in Moderna Museet in Stockholm heralded a resurgence of interest in the artist. Wolfgang La Roche died in December.
- 1970 Meret Oppenheim participated and was strongly involved in discussions on feminism.
- 1975 Was awarded the City of Basle Art Prize.
- 1982 Was awarded the Berlin City Grand Art Prize and participated at *documenta 7* in Kassel.
- 1983 Her fountain was erected at Waisenhausplatz in Bern and was met by controversial discussion
- 1985 On November 15 Meret Oppenheim died in Basle of a heart attack. She was buried in Carona in the family grave.

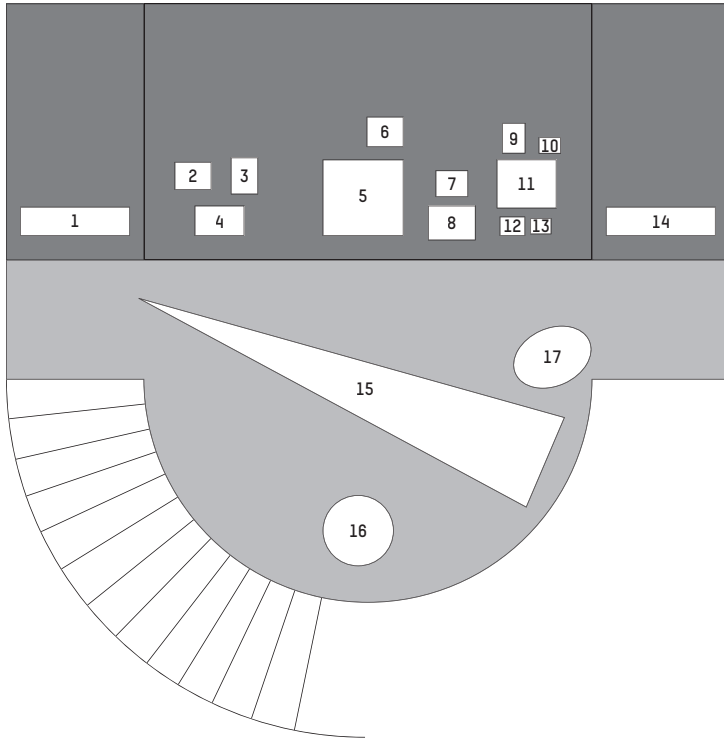
About Vidya Gastaldon's Art

Vidya Gastaldon depicts constant transformation in her paintings, drawings, and sculptures. Her bizarre and extravagant figures and landscapes are depicted in a way that oscillates between detailed, realistic truth and disintegration of form into organic and abstract fabrications. Her landscapes often bulge into creatures or resemble deities or, vice versa, absorb single figures in their seething and animate flora. The different layers of color optically interpenetrate one another in her drawings and paintings, making the surfaces very much alive. Additionally the artist likes to include numerous small details such as tiny points of light, small hearts, eyes, and minuscule organic forms that proliferate along the outlines of human and animal mythic creatures, insinuating further mutability. Some of the pictures are devoted to depicting cosmic energy—waves that consume everything in their way, volcanoes that explode, conflagrations, or radiant heavenly apparitions. They are all imbued with an energy that is either waiting to explode or is in the process of unfolding its powers. Sometimes the artist strews human limbs over her landscapes and thereby animates the supposedly inanimate. In this way Gastaldon engages with a reality that we no longer perceive with our senses, but one that flashes up briefly in dreams, visions, and hallucinations. For her recent object-installations she painted eyes on crockery. Inspired by representations of the Last Supper and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the artist designed a fictitious tea party where the crockery stares at the museum visitors. Here she adopts a classical surrealist procedure similar to used by Meret Oppenheim for her famous *fur cup*—making something unexpected and alien of

simple everyday objects in order to point out hidden forces lurking behind the visible.

Gastaldon's work has been inspired by many things. They range from holy texts to *SpongeBob* and *Barbapapa*. What connects all Gastaldon's sources is the search for spiritual truth, which she finds in highly diverse motifs. Like Meret Oppenheim who found access to the unconscious through exploring archetypes, Gastaldon seeks out the holy and spiritual, which she discovers in banal symbols. For example, the artist recognizes a «cosmic smile» fitting for a benevolent Buddha in the smiley face born of American popular culture. However, this does not stop her from suddenly and unexpectedly distorting it into a malicious grin in some of her pictures. Following the Hindu principle of 'advaita» (the non-dual), Gastaldon avoids hierarchies among her motifs so they all are equally valid. Instead her pictorial inventions attempt to represent the simultaneity of contradictions, of contradictions that ultimately turn out to be complementary or even the same thing in the end.

Captions room no. 1



- 1 **Vidya Gastaldon**, *Crazy, cruel and full of love*, 2011, acrylic, oil on canvas, Courtesy Guy Bärtschi
- 2 **Vidya Gastaldon**, *Hell ain't a bad place*, 2012, watercolour, acrylic, gouache, coloured pencil on paper, Courtesy the artist
- 3 **Vidya Gastaldon**, *Atri le dévorant*, 2010, watercolour, acrylic, gouache, coloured pencil on paper, Courtesy Galerie art concept Paris
- 4 **Meret Oppenheim**, *White Cloud*, 1980, oil pastel on grey paper
- 5 **Vidya Gastaldon**, *Pump it up*, 2012, acrylic, gouache, coloured pencil on paper, Courtesy Guy Bärtschi
- 6 **Meret Oppenheim**, *A Princess for Adolf Wölfli*, 1974, gouache and collage on grey paper
- 7 **Meret Oppenheim**, *The Suffering of Geneviève*, 1939, oil on canvas
- 8 **Vidya Gastaldon**, *Of creation*, 2009, coloured pencil, pencil on paper, Courtesy Guy Bärtschi
- 9 **Meret Oppenheim**, *Reflexion of the Moon in the Lagoons*, 1977, oil pastel on grey paper
- 10 **Vidya Gastaldon**, *Dram, drum, dream*, 2009, acrylic, gouache, watercolour, pencil, coloured pencil on paper, Courtesy Guy Bärtschi
- 11 **Meret Oppenheim**, *Planetary Orbit*, 1976, gouache, acrylic on paper
- 12 **Vidya Gastaldon**, *What senses do we lack*, 2009, watercolour, acrylic, gouache, coloured pencil on paper, Courtesy Galerie art concept Paris
- 13 **Vidya Gastaldon**, *The Eye in the Sky*, 2008, watercolour, gouache, pencil, coloured pencil, Courtesy the artist.
- 14 **Vidya Gastaldon**, *The Anonymous Power*, 2011, acrylic, oil on canvas, Courtesy Guy Bärtschi
- 15 **Vidya Gastaldon**, *Hamakarma*, 2006, wool, Courtesy the artist
- 16 **Vidya Gastaldon**, *When we're having tea, we don't fuck around*, 2012, installation, painted china, Courtesy the artist
- 17 **Vidya Gastaldon**, *Shiva Linga (Uchu Baba)*, 2008, sculpture, fabric, wool, Kunstmuseum Bern

Vidya Gastaldon: Biography

Born in 1974 in Besançon (FR), lives and works in Geneva and la Grange Neuve (CH). www.vidyarama.ch

Prizes and awards

2006 Swiss Art Award

2005 Swiss Art Award

Collections

Fonds Municipal d'Art Contemporain de la Ville de Genève

Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Paris (FR)

FRAC Piemonte, Turin (IT)

FRAC Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Marseilles (FR)

Grazer Kunstverein, Graz (AT)

Kunstmuseum Thun

Musée Jenisch, Vevey

Musée National d'Art Moderne – Centre Pompidou, Paris (FR)

The New Art Gallery, Walsall Museum, Walsall (UK)

Kunstmuseum Bern

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About Francisco Sierra's Art

Francisco Sierra is a self-taught artist and his carefree approach to art matches that of the young Meret Oppenheim when she began her first pen and ink drawings and oilpaintings in Paris during the early 1930s. She was neither concerned about whether it was allowable to use certain imagery nor about pursuing a uniform style in her art. And even though the artist caught up on especially the crafts side and skills of art techniques in the 1940s, this did not lead to a reduction of spontaneity in style and subject matter. Her main concern was, after all, artistic freedom. For Francisco Sierra too this has utmost priority. He engages with artistic freedom and how to explore his interests by means of painting. With this goal he explores the history and theory of painting with its rules, conventions, and innate contradictions. Sierra's investigations of still lifes, the nude, genre, or portraits revolve around issues of beauty, expression, and the appropriateness of motifs and subject matter. He often explores the limits of freedom of expression, which are in reality not very flexible at all—particularly because they concern issues of taste. Repeatedly even the professional sector reminds him of these limits by not comprehending his work. It must be admitted that he also specifically aims to strain the limits of freedom of expression by working with kitsch, such as in the case of the painted marble relief *Rimini-Elégance (The Unicorn Ballet)* (2012). He found the shells in the holiday resort Rimini that inspired him to create the rather plump unicorns. But on the whole the image is purely an invention of the artist, who creates a certain tension by imitating expensive material in an artwork representing absurd subject matter.

Francisco Sierra: Biography

Born in 1977 in Santiago de Chile (CL), lives and works in Cotterd and Bern. www.fsierra.ch

Francisco Sierra is a realistic and figurative painter. Among his surrealistic works, Sierra's realistic approach in painting has its greatest impact in his *Würmli-Bilder (Worm Pictures)*, from 2012 onwards) or the painting *Mama* (2007). These works have an obviously surrealistic appearance that is, all in all, a politically incorrect fireworks of absurdities painted in great detail, ranging from childish and naive elements or ludicrous frivolities to pornography and blasphemy. For the exhibition *Meret's Sparks*, Sierra replicated Meret Oppenheim's fur bracelet in larger-than-life dimensions. The fur bracelet was a precursor to the famous *fur cup* that made the young woman artist internationally famous just after turning 20. Subsequent to her early fame, the world initially failed to comprehend her later work or chose to ignore it. Therefore, Francisco Sierra has further works by Meret Oppenheim «bud out» of the fur covering the bracelet. This is a reaction to the one-dimensional view of Meret Oppenheim's work that comprehends the avant-garde artist as a «one-hit wonder.» Sierra wishes to point out that Meret Oppenheim's oeuvre was highly diverse, and demonstrates his admiration for an artist who refused to let the world typecast her as «the artist who covered found objects with fur.»

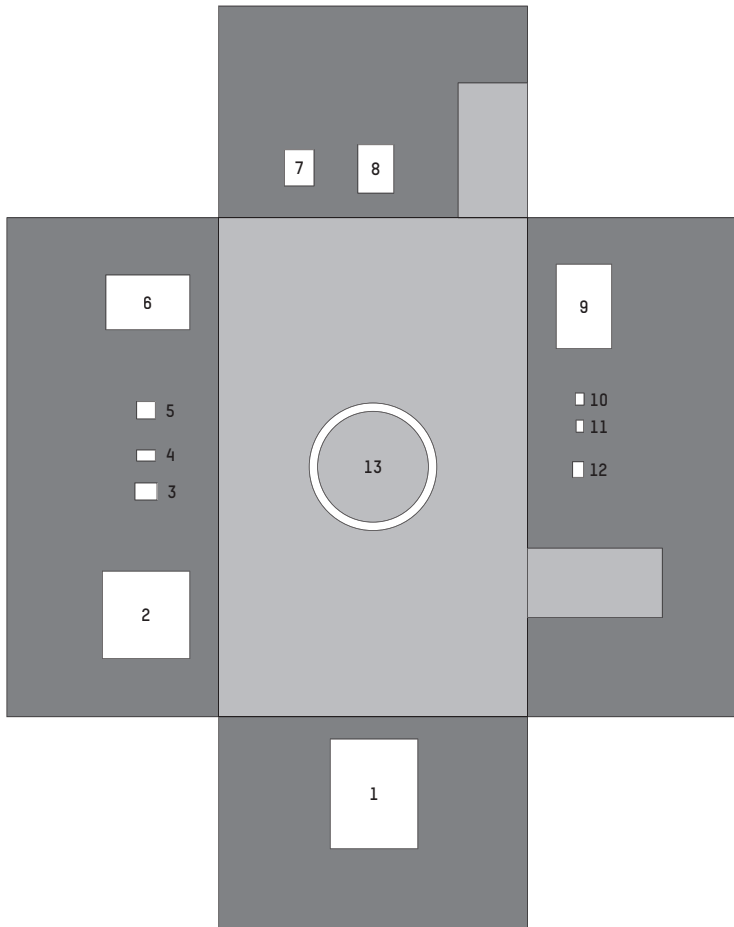
Prizes and awards

- 2011 Summer Academy at the Paul Klee Center,
curated by Pipilotti Rist
Working Grant from the Canton of Appenzell Ausser Rhoden
- 2010 Studio Scholarship in London, Landis & Gyr Foundation /
IBK Award «Drawing»
- 2009 Aeschlimann Corti Scholarship Award /
Grant from the Canton of St. Gallen
- 2008 Cahier d'Artiste, Série VIII, Pro Helvetia
- 2007 Swiss Art Award / Kiefer Hablitzel Grant / Rotary Prize
- 2006 Kiefer Hablitzel Grant

Collections

Aargauer Kunsthhaus, Aarau
CentrePasquArt, Biel
Kunstmuseum Bern
Kunstmuseum St. Gallen
Collection of the Canton of Lucerne
Collection of the Canton of St. Gallen
Schweizerisches Mobiliar Collection
Collection of the City of St. Gallen
Kunstverein Biel
Museum im Bellpark, Kriens
Wilhelm Hack Museum, Ludwigshafen / Rhine (DE)
Château de Nyon, Musée historique et des porcelaines
Nationale Suisse Collection

Captions in room no. 2



- 1 **Francisco Sierra**, *Oylen*, 2012, oil on canvas, Courtesy the artist
- 2 **Francisco Sierra**, *Dekorationsteller feat. The Ugly Man*, 2012, oil on canvas, Courtesy the artist
- 3 **Francisco Sierra**, *Die Dreieckigung des Würmligotts*, 2012, oil on canvas, Courtesy the artist
- 4 **Francisco Sierra**, *Würmligeist*, 2012, oil on canvas, Courtesy the artist
- 5 **Francisco Sierra**, *Würmligott*, 2012, oil on wood, Courtesy the artist
- 6 **Francisco Sierra**, *Les Trois Rois*, 2012, oil on canvas, Courtesy the artist
- 7 **Francisco Sierra**, *Mama*, 2007, oil on wood, private collection Switzerland, Courtesy the artist
- 8 **Meret Oppenheim**, *La fin embarrassée*, 1971–1982, oil on canvas, private collection
- 9 **Francisco Sierra**, *Rimini-Elégance (The Unicorn Ballet)*, 2012, oil on canvas, Courtesy the artist
- 10 **Francisco Sierra**, *Twilight*, 2012, oil on canvas, Courtesy the artist
- 11 **Francisco Sierra**, *Würmlihochzeit*, 2012, oil on canvas, Courtesy the artist
- 12 **Francisco Sierra**, *Würmlifamilie*, 2012, oil on canvas, Courtesy the artist
- 13 **Francisco Sierra**, *Bracelotus giganteus*, 2012, wood, brass, faux fur, Courtesy the artist

in clockwise direction:

Meret Oppenheim, *Sitting Figure with folded hands*, 1933, oil on cardboard

Meret Oppenheim, *Souvenir of 'Breakfast in Fur'*, Nr. VI, 1970, collage on paper, private collection

Meret Oppenheim, *Souvenir of 'Breakfast in Fur'*, Nr. VIII, 1970, collage on paper, private collection

Meret Oppenheim, *Boredom*, 1937/38, India Ink on paper, private collection

Meret Oppenheim, *Hornet and Bumblebee*, 1945, oil on cardboard, private collection Switzerland

Meret Oppenheim, *Bird with Parasite*, 1939, oil on wood, private collection Switzerland

About Elisabeth Llach's Art

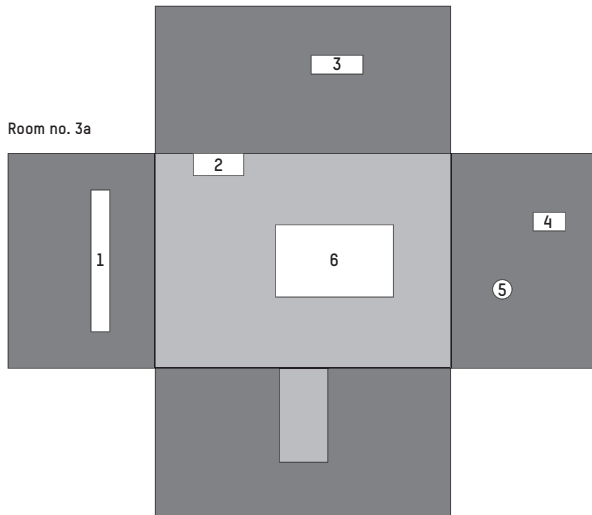
At first glance it is difficult to see the similarities between Elisabeth Llach's artworks and Meret Oppenheim's oeuvre. In contrast to her early avant-garde female predecessor, Elisabeth Llach's works build thematic, formal groups marked by a virtuosity of style and bearing a very distinctive individual stamp. Elisabeth Llach uses photographic templates that she merges into unique and novel universes. The role of women is a strong thematic interest of her work, but she tackles such subject matter in a different way to Oppenheim, who pursued it especially from a cultural and political viewpoint and not visually. Llach's universe is peopled by small girls, femmes fatales, and ex-centric divas. They are either scantily dressed or wear extravagant costumes, with unreal-proportioned body parts and exaggerated facial features. In this way the artist underscores the hysteria that characterizes the role imposed on the female body and how it is presented in our society, alluding to how it is violated in order to meet some of the off-beat ideals associated with femininity. The dramatic lighting, the expressive gestures, and the focus of the action on highly significant moments imbue her pictures with an overtly theatrical quality. However, the artist maintains a disciplined reserve despite the staged overstatement of her art. She only suggests surroundings, is very restrained in her use of color, and applies strong lighting very selectively—reminding us with the latter of lighting on a stage. In her very recent series, Elisabeth Llach reverts to motifs used by the surrealist Hans Bellmer, presents Pietro Longhi's rhinoceros, and cites works by Robert Gober or Cindy Sherman. Her arrangements of absurd narratives conjure up memories of nightmares. Whereas

Meret Oppenheim used her dreams largely to map transformations of her mental states, Elisabeth Llach explores the paths of the surrealists who looked to dreams to analyze society's ways and even to come to terms with problems in life.

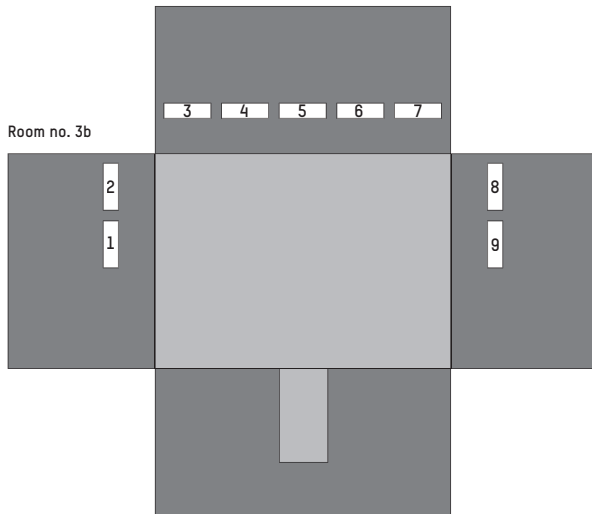
For the exhibition *Meret's Sparks*, Elisabeht Llach has produced an installation comprising two parts representing day and night. In two identical museum rooms facing one another she has hung, in one of them, oil paintings in orange-colored light, which can be interpreted as sunrise. In the room opposite she presents a very dark, narrow and winding cabinet with large showcases that can be viewed through slits or peepholes. The ceiling has been lowered and modelled after Meret Oppenheim's bedroom in her house in Ticino with its low ceiling. The showcases contain assemblages with works by Llachs together with masks, objects and paintings by Meret Oppenheim, making up a surrealist cabinet of curiosities. Here too the artist is true to her characteristic approach in making art by integrating Meret Oppenheim's works in her own artistic universe.

Captions in room no. 3a / 3b

Room no. 3a



Room no. 3b



Room 3a (from left to right):

- 1 **Elisabeth Llach**, *Et jamais ne revient No. 4, 9, 6, 3, 5, 8, 2, 10, 11*, 2012, Lead and red and black pencil on paper, Courtesy the artist and Katz Contemporary, Zürich
 - 2 **Meret Oppenheim**, *Knife*, 1975, glass splinters, hemp and four painted buttons on a butcher's knife
 - 3 **Meret Oppenheim**, *An Evening in the Year 1910*, 1972, oil on fibreboard with imitation tiles
 - 4 **Meret Oppenheim**, *Flame on Its Bed of Fire*, 1954, gouache on black paper, private collection
 - 5 **Meret Oppenheim**, *Evening Dress with Bra-strap Necklace*, 1968, Mannequin torso, glass-bead necklace, oil paint, bits of glass, Collection Pictet & Cie
 - 6 **Elisabeth Llach**, *Mastic*, 2012, mask, plastic, dog hair, Courtesy the artist
- Elisabeth Llach**, 85 painted plates from the series *Clara*, 2011, acrylic on ceramics, Courtesy the artist and Katz Contemporary, Zürich
- Leonor Fini**, *Portrait of Meret Oppenheim*, 1938, oil on canvas, private collection Switzerland
- Meret Oppenheim**, *Mask: White Mask*, c. 1976, mask, wadding, nose of sequined fabric and wire, private collection Switzerland
- Meret Oppenheim**, *Face in Cloud*, 1971, Rugosit and wood, painted with oil and watercolour, varnished, The Hermann and Margrit Rupf-Foundation

Raum 3b:

- 1 **Elisabeth Llach**, *Vagues 6*, 2011
- 2 **Elisabeth Llach**, *Vagues 17*, 2012
- 3 **Elisabeth Llach**, *Vagues 14*, 2012
- 4 **Elisabeth Llach**, *Vagues 11*, 2011
- 5 **Elisabeth Llach**, *Vagues 10*, 2011
- 6 **Elisabeth Llach**, *Vagues 8*, 2011
- 7 **Elisabeth Llach**, *Vagues 15*, 2012
- 8 **Elisabeth Llach**, *Vagues 16*, 2012
- 9 **Elisabeth Llach**, *Vagues 18*, 2012

all 9 works: acrylic on paper, mounted on wood, acrylic on paper, mounted on wood, Courtesy the artist and Katz Contemporary, Zürich

Elisabeth Llach: Biography

Born 1970 in Neuenburg, lives and works in La Russille (CH).

Prizes and awards

- 2009 Prix du Jury of Accrochage Vaud 2009
- 2008 Alice Bailly Prize
- 1996-97 Istituto Svizzero, Artist in residence, Rome (IT)
- 1995 Serex Prize for Painting

Collections

- Banque Cantonale Vaudoise (BCV), Lausanne
- Fonds cantonal d'art contemporain, Geneva
- MAMCO Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Geneva

About Maya Bringolf's Art

In collages and sculptures that reveal her great acumen of vision, Maya Bringolf places greatly disparate realities face-to-face and lets them enter into a bizarre dialogue. As we may well ask: What does a pipe organ have in common with an oil platform? One stands for baroque concerts, for ceremonies, and the Church, whereas the other serves only economic purposes by extracting oil and gas from subsea wells. Combined, the two objects produce a new poetic reality. The pipe organ rises majestically over the sea's surface, and its pipes jut up into the sky. They appear as if enthroned, a commanding presence supported by the colossal concrete legs of the platform. Although the façade of the organ initially seems clearly defined against the grey backdrop, on closer inspection the slim and elegant organ pipes merge with the chaotically grouped pipes of the oil platform into a surreal single entity. By combining elements aesthetically we are led to ponder on possible not-yet-visible links. Are, for example, both symbols for sinking? Or do they insinuate the circulation of hidden energy? In the musical instrument air is circulated and thereby musical energy is produced, whereas the main source of energy in our world today lies in the mineral oil and gas flowing through the pipes of the oil platform. Linking disparate in order to influence the sensitivity of an audience is a common procedure in surrealism. The surrealists explored the play of opposites to the very limits of the conceivable and even beyond. However, Maya Bringolf brings contrasting objects together in such a way that they may appear to formally conflate, but they stand for very different things. At the same time we

Maya Bringolf: Biography

can discern sociocritical and ecological undertones. Especially the counterpart of the sculpture with air pipes awakens such associations: it is the simulation of a pile of dirt with single human limbs. Could this be the price we have to pay for the majestic oil-rig organ?

Meret Oppenheim too was extremely fascinated by how nature and culture interlink and where to draw a line between the two. She was well aware also of how fragile nature always was and is, and how humankind's relationship to nature was contradictory and irrational. Therefore Bringolf chose to juxtapose her creations with Meret Oppenheim's Cadavres-exquis works. The Cadavres-exquis are drawings and collages that Oppenheim made during a surrealist game with friends. All those playing the game drew a segment, folded the sheet of paper together, and gave it to the next person to add another part without knowing what had been drawn prior to this. The bizarre works that were produced in this way are impressive demonstrations of how our understanding is only one mode of grasping reality, and that such games give the unconscious much more room to become manifest. In this way, play is a means of poetic and humorous subterfuge for undermining the usual avenues of thought, which today are increasingly oriented toward efficiency and economics.

Born 1969 in Shaffhausen, lives and works in Basle and Zurich.
www.mayabringolf.com

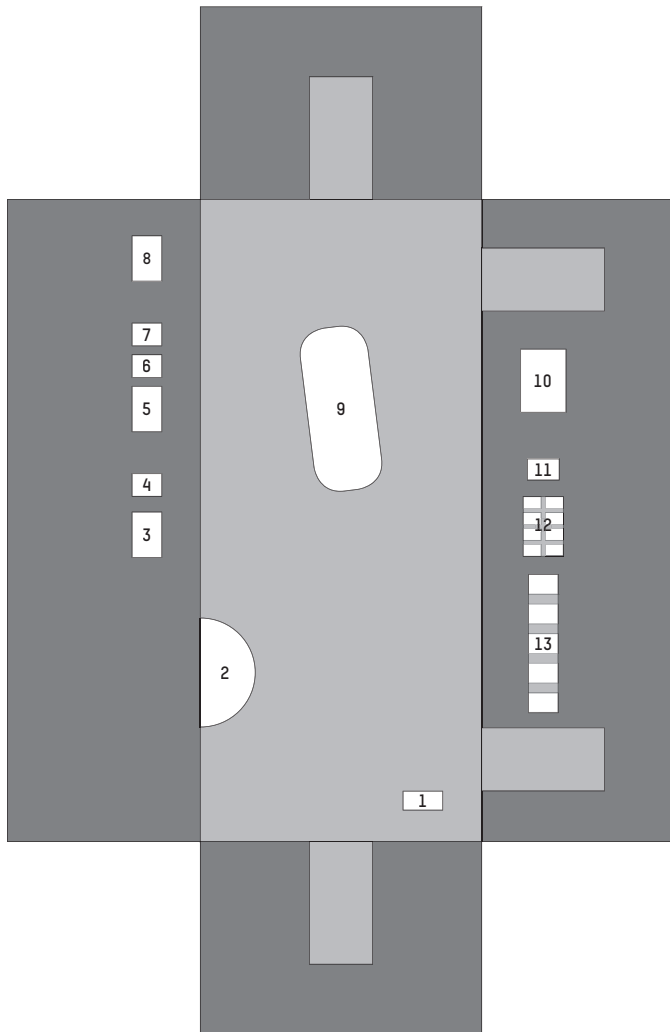
Prizes and awards

- 2009 Swiss Art Award / Working Grant, Kunstcredit Basel-Stadt / Ernte Art Prize 2009 of Credit Suisse, Schaffhausen
- 2008 Swiss Art Award
- 2005 2005 Cultural Development Prize of the Alexander Clavel Foundation
- 2004 Residency in Berlin: Atelier Berlin, Kunstcredit of the City of Basle
- 2003 Residency abroad in Studio in Helsinki (FI) / iaab, Christoph Merian Foundation, Basle
- 2001 Ernte Art Prize of Credit Suisse, Schaffhausen
- 2000 First prize in the Danner Wettbewerb, Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Munich

Collections

Hauser & Wirth Collection
Julius Bär Collection
Museum zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen
John Schmid Collection, Kloster Schöenthal Foundation
Kunstcredit Collection, Museum.BL, Canton of Basel-Landschaft

Captions in room no. 4



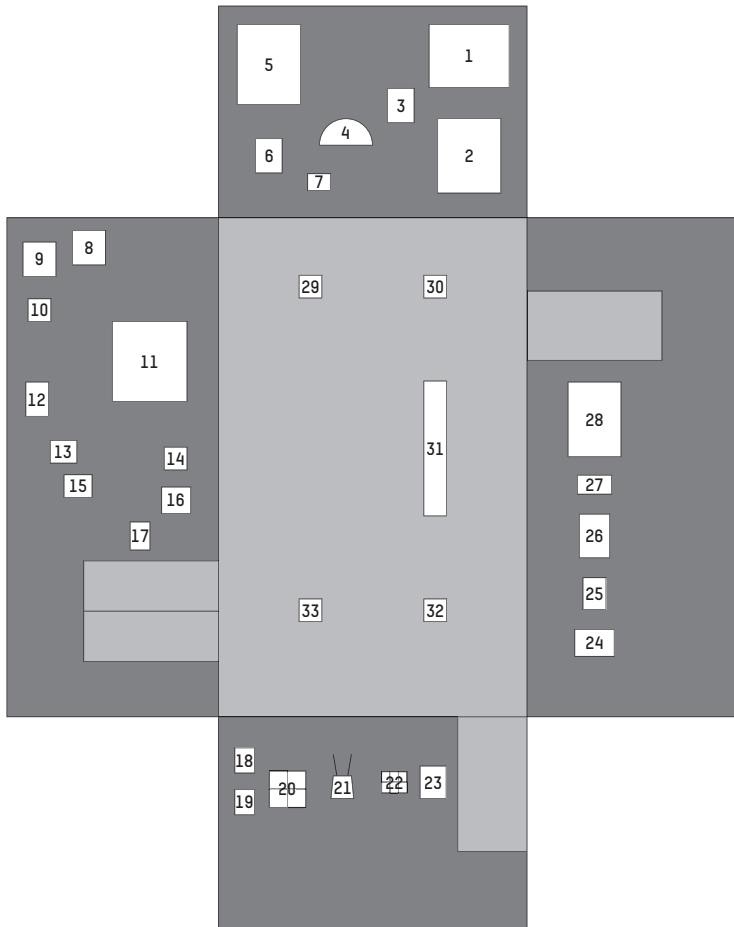
- 1 **Meret Oppenheim**, *Six clouds on a Bridge*, 1975, bronze
- 2 **Maya Bringolf**, *Kontrapost*, 2012,
installation mixed media, wax cast, Courtesy the artist
- 3 **Maya Bringolf**, *Bohrorgel 6*, 2012
- 4 **Maya Bringolf**, *Bohrorgel 3*, 2012
- 5 **Maya Bringolf**, *Bohrorgel 5*, 2012
- 6 **Maya Bringolf**, *Bohrorgel 8*, 2012
- 7 **Maya Bringolf**, *Bohrorgel 1*, 2012
- 8 **Maya Bringolf**, *Bohrorgel 7*, 2012
all 6 pieces: inkjet, synthetic resin varnish, paper, Courtesy the artist
- 9 **Maya Bringolf**, *Durch den Wind*, 2012,
installation, ventilating tube, organ pipe, sound, Courtesy the artist
- 10 **Meret Oppenheim**, *For Karoline von Günderode*, 1983, oil on canvas
- 11 **Meret Oppenheim**, *Symmetrical Face, crossed with Diagonales*, 1960,
pencil on paper
- 12 **Meret Oppenheim**, *La camomille vagabonde / L'arc-en-ciel dada /
Le rossignol qui joui / L'empreinte est morte / L'ours anxieux /
La pipe pacifiste / La maîtresse pétillante / Lui de la passion*,
all 8 pieces: from 1971, *Cadavres exquis*, in cooperation with Roberto Lupo
and Annamaria Boetti, pencil on paper, private collection
- 13 **Meret Oppenheim**, *L'ours anxieux / L'arc-en-ciel dada / La maîtresse pétillante /
Le rossignol qui joui / La camomille vagabonde*,
all 5 pieces: from 1971, *Cadavres exquis*, in cooperation with Roberto Lupo
and Annamaria Boetti, mixed media and collage on paper, private collection

About Tatjana Gerhard's Art

Empty rooms, deserted and desolate landscapes, and strange figures or segments of bodies play a key role in Tatjana Gerhard's oil paintings and drawings. Just as in surrealism, her empty and strange landscapes embody forebodings of evil, and the human figure very probably signifies alienation. The artist only alludes to subject matter in a fragmentary way, or we are confronted by very close-up views. Such an approach makes spatial orientation impossible for the beholder, so that we consequently cannot grasp what is happening in the picture. It also makes it impossible for us to remain aloof to what is represented. Therefore, in her work, we again and again witness strange events over which we have no control. The action depicted in her pictures remains a mystery even after viewing the work for a long time—because Tatjana Gerhard's figures behavior is so unusual. Much of what they do has neither purpose nor goal, nor can we discover a reason for their actions. In contrast, their gestures and facial expressions are highly articulate, as if they wished to compensate for their enigmatic existence. Weird movements, bodies in bonds, deformed faces, faces covered by masks, and severed gesticulating hands wearing white gloves represent the artist's palette of expression. An aura of discomfort and anguish predominates in her work and infects the viewer. Color too strongly determines the ambience in Tatjana Gerhard's paintings. Her mastery of oil painting is enviable. She produces breathtaking results by using generous and spirited brushstrokes, juxtaposing rich and brilliant tones with muddy and broken areas of color as well as adding transparent colored

glazes, and finally applying a glossy finish. Her perfection in technique is a jagged contrast to the arcane and unconscious urges that are represented in the alien surroundings. The artist exploits the sensual beauty of painting as a vehicle to present to the public the latent and destructive violence inherent in the subject matter of her work. Her beholders find themselves in a dilemma. In order to just enjoy the paintings visually we must also take in and accept the subject matter that they allude to: The destructive ambivalence of humanity, its dramas and states of mind ruled by contradictory emotions; fears we cannot come to terms with; and the inarticulate burning at a glow in our unconscious. This is the substance of Tatjana Gerhard's art, and it is indeed not easy to digest. She makes us look into a surreal and distorted mirror that seems to present fairytales and dreams, but in fact—in a codified way—she makes us face the most terrible things we can imagine. Just like the surrealists and Meret Oppenheim, the artist has invented a vocabulary of oneiric figures and spectre-like houses and landscapes that articulate issues relevant to our society. Even though they cannot be put into words—or perhaps for this very reason—they have a strong impact on us.

Captions in room no. 5



- 1 **Tatjana Gerhard**, *Untitled*, 2010, oil on canvas, Kanton Zürich
- 2 **Tatjana Gerhard**, *Untitled*, 2012, oil on canvas, Courtesy Rotwand
- 3 **Tatjana Gerhard**, *Untitled*, 2012, oil on canvas, Courtesy Rotwand
- 4 **Meret Oppenheim**, *Three Black Pears*, 1935/1936, oil on canvas, Hermann and Margrit Rupf-Foundation
- 5 **Tatjana Gerhard**, *Glushti*, 2012, oil on canvas, Courtesy Rotwand
- 6–7 **Tatjana Gerhard**, *Untitled*, 2012, oil on canvas, Courtesy Rotwand
- 8–11 **Tatjana Gerhard**, *Untitled*, 2012, oil on canvas, Courtesy Rotwand
- 12 **Tatjana Gerhard**, *Untitled*, 2011, oil on canvas, private collection
- 13 **Tatjana Gerhard**, *Servant*, 2012, oil on canvas, Courtesy Deweer Gallery, Otegem, Belgium
- 14 **Tatjana Gerhard**, *Untitled*, 2012, oil on canvas, private collection
- 15 **Tatjana Gerhard**, *Ach*, 2012, oil on canvas, private collection
- 16 **Meret Oppenheim**, *Young Prince*, 1968, collage, Foundation Anne-Marie and Victor Loeb
- 17 **Tatjana Gerhard**, *Untitled*, 2011, oil on canvas, private collection
- 18 **Meret Oppenheim**, *Centaur on the Ocean Floor*, 1932, pencil, watercolour on paper, private collection Switzerland
- 19 **Meret Oppenheim**, *One Person watching Another Dying*, 1933, india ink on paper
- 20 **Tatjana Gerhard**, *Untitled*, 2012, 4 drawings, pencil on paper, Courtesy Rotwand
- 21 **Meret Oppenheim**, *Ginger Bread Monster Chair*, 1967, velvet on maple wood with wool pillows by Lilly Keller
- 22 **Tatjana Gerhard**, *Untitled*, 2012, 6 drawings, pencil on paper, Courtesy Rotwand
- 23 **Meret Oppenheim**, *Untitled*, 1971, felt pen and coloured pencil on paper
- 24–27 **Tatjana Gerhard**, *Untitled*, 2012, oil on canvas, Courtesy Rotwand
- 28 **Meret Oppenheim**, *Reddish Tower*, 1979, oil pastels on paper

in the show cases:

- 29 **Meret Oppenheim**, *The Vulture*, 1985, plastic mass on wooden plinth in original cabinet, private collection
- 30 **Meret Oppenheim**, *Giacometti's Ear*, 1977, bronze, private collection
- 31 **Meret Oppenheim**, *Handwritten Notes of an Experiment with the Drug Cy-Teonanacatl - Psillosibin on 10 April 1965*, blue ink and pencil on paper
- 32 **Meret Oppenheim**, *Box with Little Animals*, 1963, small box with sliding cover, interior painted in oil, Italian bowtie pasta
- 33 **Meret Oppenheim**, *The Glove*, 1985, Edition 47/150, Edition for Parkett Magazine 4, painted suede goatskin

Tatjana Gerhard: Biography

Born 1974 in Zurich, lives and works in Ghent (BE).

Prizes and awards

- 2008 Working Grant of the Canton of Zurich
- 2007 Recognition Award of the Zollikon Municipality
- 2006 Working Grant of the Canton of Zurich

Collections

- Julius Bär Collection
- John Jones Art Collection (UK)
- Canton of Zurich Collection
- City of Zurich Collection
- Roche Collection
- Nationale Suisse Collection
- S.M.A.K., Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent (BE)
- Sturzenegger Foundation, Schaffhausen
- Zürcher Kantonalbank, Zurich

Agenda

Öffentliche Führungen

Sonntag, 11h: 21. Oktober,
4./18. November, 9./30. Dezember,
13./ 20. Januar, 10. Februar
Dienstag, 19h: 23. Oktober,
6./13. November, 18. Dezember,
8. Januar, 5. Februar

Einführung für Lehrpersonen

Dienstag, 23. Oktober, 18h
Mittwoch, 24. Oktober, 14h
Anmeldung erforderlich:
T 031 328 09 11,
vermittlung@kunstmuseumbern.ch
Kosten: CHF 10.00

Visite commentée publique:

Mardi, 30 octobre, 19h30

Zeitfenster Gegenwart:

Gespräche mit den Künstler/innen
jeweils Dienstag, 18h – 19h
30. Oktober: Maya Bringolf im Gespräch
mit Kathleen Bühler, Kuratorin
27. November: Vidya Gastaldon
en dialogue avec Fabrice Stroun,
Directeur Kunsthalle Bern
11. Dezember: Francisco Sierra im
Gespräch mit Magdalena Schindler,
Kunstvermittlerin
15. Januar: Elisabeth Llach im
Gespräch mit Kathleen Bühler,
Kuratorin
29. Januar: Tatjana Gerhard im
Gespräch mit Sarah Merten,
wiss. Mitarbeiterin

Katalogvernissage

und Performance-Abend:
Dienstag, 20. November 2012, 19h
Improvisation: Anna Huber (Tanz),
Martin Schütz (Cello, Electronics)
«massepain»: Noëlle-Anne Darbellay
(Violine, Violinophon und Stimme),
Samuel Stoll (präpariertes Marsch-
musikwaldhorn und Stimme)

«Charisma, Lust und Libido»

Sonntag, 10. Februar 2013, 16h
Performance mit Studierenden der
Hochschule der Künste HKB unter
der Leitung von František Klossner

**Kollektiv Frei_Raum: Wir träumen
Meret – eine integrative Hörinstallation
zum Meret Oppenheim-Brunnen:** «Der
Künstler träumt für die Gesellschaft».
Ausgehend von Meret Oppenheims
Zitat, tapen wir im Dunkeln,
atmen ihre und unsere Träume ein.
Beim Ausatmen klingt die Welt.
www.freiraumkultur.ch
Kopfhörer mit dem szenischen Hörspiel
können vom 5. Januar bis
10. Februar 2013 an der Kasse
bezogen werden.

KINO KUNSTMUSEUM

Filmreihe zur Ausstellung:
gezeigt werden u.a. Filme
von Man Ray, Luis Buñuel, Jean
Cocteau, Maya Deren, Hans Richter,
Alain Resnais, Alejandro Jodorowski,
Werner Herzog, David Cronenberg.
Mehr Informationen ab Mitte Dezember
unter www.kinokunstmuseum.ch



INFOS

Eintrittspreis / Prix d'entrée
CHF 14.00 / CHF 10.00

Private Führungen / Visites pour groupes

T 031 328 09 11
vermittlung@kunstmuseumbern.ch

Feiertage / Jours fériés

24./25./31.12.2012: geschlossen /
fermé
01./02.01.2013: 10h–17h

KATALOG / CATALOGUE

**Merets Funken. Die Sammlung
Gegenwartskunst des Kunstmuseums
Bern, Teil 2.** Mit Beiträgen von Kathleen
Bühler, Matthias Frehner, Rita Bischof,
Thomas Hirschhorn, Jacqueline
Burckhardt, František Klossner und Hans
Christoph von Tavel, Christiane
Meyer-Thoss (Dt./Engl.), zahlreiche
Farbabbildungen, gebunden,
ca. 250 S., ISBN: 978-3-86678-678-3
Der Katalog erscheint am 20.11.2013.

Exhibition

Duration of the exhibition	October 19, 2012 – February 10, 2013
Opening	Thursday, October 18, 2012, 6:30 p.m.
Admission fee	CHF 14.00/reduced CHF 10.00
Opening times	Monday, closed Tuesday, 10:00 a.m. – 21:00 p.m. Wednesday – Sunday, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Public holidays	December 24/25/31, 2012: closed January 01, 02, 2013: 10 a.m. – 17 p.m.
Private guided tours	P +41 31 328 09 11, F +41 31 328 09 10 vermittlung@kunstmuseumbern.ch
Curator	Dr. Kathleen Bühler

Supported by



Partner of the Kunstmuseum Bern

Stiftung GegenwART
Dr. h.c. Hansjörg Wyss

Die Mobiliar
Versicherungen & Vorsorge

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