



Sabina Baumann
«Finger aus Licht»

Sabina Baumann's installation, placed directly against the gallery's glass front, presses towards the street. A rectangular surface made of acrylic spreads across the entire space, presenting itself as a kind of stage. On this stage, we encounter the unglazed clay Baumann often uses involved in a play with familiar symbols. In one corner, it has been shaped to form an urn, while at the same time the dust from the clay, hammered to bits, is spread around the space in the form of a peace sign. These supposed ashes shaped in the form of the peace symbol bring to mind sayings such as "rest in peace" or even a message from the world beyond. As if death, nothing more than a pile of dust, still thought it necessary to demonstrate to the world all its evils with this great gesture of peace. The oversized pictogram was designed in 1958 for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and can also be read in a current political context in Baumann's work, but more importantly the installation treats timeless stories of the past and of decay. The flag-like surface seems organic, stretching like a skin over the floor, and crossed by currents, it becomes a pond-like structure and recalls the topography of a green, lush landscape. Against this backdrop, the ashes seem all the more dry and transient: it seems as if they might be soaked up by the wet foundation at any moment.

This transition from body to landscape can also be found in the large pencil drawings, detailed, richly laden with symbols. By way of the hanging, there is a formal continuation from one drawing to the next, making them part of an endless story. In dreamlike, surreal contexts, they not only raise questions about the social and the political, but also about the physical and the emotional.

The peace sign appears again and again: in the work *Road Map for Peace on Wheels at Night*, it is explained in an almost textbook-like way in flag semaphore, surfacing as graffiti on a brick wall, appearing in the abstract spokes of a bicycle wheel, and in a further element of the drawing the individual lines of the symbol irregularly oscillate around the center point and form the transition to window cross bars. This in turn opens views of the private and treats in the broadest sense borders between inside and outside, the private and the political. Against the brick wall a wagonwheel loses its spokes and thus also becomes a peace symbol, but more than that, this wheel in its old-fashioned appearance contributes to an anachronism that stands for the parallel worlds that are combined in Baumann's images.

In another group of works, these worlds are inhabited by bizarre stone creatures that also emerge repeatedly in Sabina Baumann's work. They are not quite graspable, entirely freed of common social notions and clichés. In *Haufen 1*, they are, enriched with quotations from art history, towered up to form a pile of culture. Opposite this is a second pile where things are more brutal, where the issue is bare existence. Here, there's eating, excretion, and kissing, delicate plants emerge from human remains, which in turn wind up in mouths. With comic-like extremities, stones hug one another mutually and simultaneously and in so doing question culturally defined conventions in terms of the form and hierarchy among amorous relationships. Then, in the third image of this group, there is a lone form, devouring itself: its black tears have formed a lake around it. Vertical lines that can be associated with a lattice or with rain cross the entire paper. Not even sunbeams—fingers of light, to return to Sabina Baumann's metaphorical description in the exhibition title—caress this body. This melancholic representation reveals how much Baumann's drawings are always also a poetic expression of emotional sensitivities.