



**Blanca Blarer «Quiet Noise»**

**16.1. - 27.2.2021**

*“The outlook, the view of the horizon, now visible, now in the gloaming, left her unmoved. She thought about the racing sun. On its boundless light that once obliterated the line that separates the earth’s surface from the sky. And she supposed that there’s no clear division between things, only uncertainty and blurriness.”*

**Nora Schmidt**

The sun, its unbridled light and its mutability as described in this text fragment by Nora Schmidt, plays an important role in Blanca Blarer’s life and work in several ways, shining again and again in her work between architecture, sculpture, and installation. The sun also emblemizes Blarer’s profound link to the south. Her Spanish roots are one reason why the artist commuted for many years back and forth between studios in Zurich and Barcelona, and why Spain remains centrally important in her life. Her training initially began at the art academy in Seville. A year later, she transferred to Vienna’s Hochschule für Angewandte Kunst, where she completed a classical training as a painter with Maria Lassnig.

Already as a student, Blarer’s interest went far beyond the actual limits of the canvas. And yet the foundational teachings of painting–viewing, close observation, precision in terms of academic approach and craftsmanship–find a place in an artistic practice all her own. The various stations and experiences in her life have visibly shaped her spatial interventions. In her sculptural work and art and architecture projects, Blanca Blarer thus explores and develops the potential of materiality, light, movement, and space. This is the formal language of possibilities that is demonstrated by the works in the exhibition “Quiet Noise.”

Along the walls, five works are installed. They share a construction based on a foundational platform and moving swiveling panels that by way of aluminum hinges can be individually opened or closed, layered and positioned. Consisting of four series of gray lacquered wood fiber panels placed beneath one another, *Pavilion Gray Quartet* (2020) reveals the foundational principle behind these expansive works. At first glance, the formal language is simple and readily understood. Yet, upon closer inspection, the programmatic complexity of the wall sculpture reveals itself. Thanks to the individual swiveling panels, it is alterable, so that the range of possibilities is not only inexhaustible but almost impossible to follow. The contrast between reticent materiality and impulsive boundlessness is reflected in the exhibition title: Blanca Blarer’s works are simultaneously quiet and noisy.

The two formal notions might in principle be contrary to one another, but they leave a great deal of room for the sculptures to take on a role of their own. Beyond their inherent form, the surrounding space and the existing light are what have a decisive influence on perception. The



two works with the title *Blackened* (2020) and the pair of works *Pavilion Gray Cristal* (2020) show how light and space can interact with the material and the mutable structure. Beside the individual swiveling panels of wood, four glass panels are outfitted with a thin brass or aluminum frame. Not only the glass reflects the surrounding space, but so does the slightly glossy, grained surface of the acrylic lacquer with which the wooden panels are painted. Like a kaleidoscope, the reflecting surfaces cast the light back into the space. The different shades of gray that provide the five works their title reveal a great spectrum of color thanks to various effects of the light that goes far beyond any simple color attribution.

This subtle way of emphasizing aspects of form, material, and color challenges the beholders to position themselves differently and to interact with the works from close up and from a distance. The entire process of perception is slowed, the gaze focused. Shadows, reflections, and changes in color become an important, form-defining part of the works. The wall sculptures transform to vital studies in light where the qualities are intensely observed and researched.

The spatial model *Dimpse* (2020) could also be considered a research object. The point of departure for the model presented on a pedestal is the side exhibition space at Galerie Mark Müller. With two identical walls the height of the room that, like the other works in the exhibition, can be swiveled, the artist presents a potential project: the two walls, depending on their positioning, have a great influence on the overall perception of the space, its structuring and the way light falls on it. With minimal means, maximal changes in the space are made possible. The model is at the same time a mental figure for the artist to explore sustainable spatial solutions with minimal interventions.

Blarer constructs new sites with her works: time-spaces in which individual parts form a whole through movement and encounter. The unusual supports she uses require precise observation, and sometimes patience. The artist thus creates the conditions for an intense experience of vision in which the lines between the work and the space increasingly dissolve. "After all, the world is around me and not in front of me," as the French philosopher and phenomenologist wrote in his 1961 essay "Eye and Mind." He continues to explore the relationship between space, light, and its influence on perception and concludes: "No more is it a question of speaking of space and light; the question is to make space and light, which are there, speak to us."

In the work of Blanca Blarer, space and light are quite literally audible, quiet and noisy at the same time.

Marlene Bürgi, trans. Brian Currid