

Embracing Sensation

The Kunstmuseum Bern is showing *Silvia Gertsch, Xerxes Ach: Embracing Sensation* from Oct. 23, 2015 until Feb. 21, 2016. Loosely following the trend of the 1990s in which the Kunstmuseum Bern mounted exhibitions of artist couples, we are presenting an overview of the work of Silvia Gertsch (b. 1963) and Xerxes Ach (b. 1957) since 1990. Despite the fact that these two Bernese artists have adopted very different styles of painting, they both strive to find a fitting way to articulate their inner visions and personal sensory experience. They transform what they see and feel into painting, finding inspiration in photographs and intense aesthetic experience.

The struggle to enhance appreciation of sensory perception pervades the paintings of Silvia Gertsch (b. 1963 in Bern) and Xerxes Ach (b. 1957 in Esslingen on the Neckar), which are strongly marked by the sensations caused by color and light as well as surface phenomena. Their professional careers began in the 1980s in the medium of painting. The two artists met in the early 1990s and, since then, live in a relationship and work side by side on their respective, individual art projects. Silvia Gertsch applies reverse-glass painting for rendering snapshot scenes of young people in summer, sunbathing, strolling through the streets, or children playing, oblivious to everything else. In contrast, Xerxes Ach studies the micro phenomena produced by light hitting the surfaces of different materials. In this way he creates abstract pictures that probe color and light in their compositional versatility and forcefulness as elementary means of expression in painting.

Realism—Color-Field Painting

Despite their very different artistic styles—on the one hand realism and on the other abstract color-field painting—Silvia Gertsch and Xerxes Ach both adopt a very similar approach in the execution of their work. Their mutual starting point comprises photographs that capture ephemeral visual sensations. In Gertsch's case, they are beautiful scenes of carefree, everyday life, which the artist has captured using her cell-phone camera and then digitally processed as the basic framework for her reverse-glass paintings. For his part, Xerxes Ach uses advertising images, illustrations of artworks, and landscape photographs as his models, enlarging details of the light and color effects existing therein. He then translates this into painting and forms it into a spiritual and cosmic view of the world. What both artists share is their fascination for the transience of life as well as exploring intuitive, sensory perception. The exhibition *Silvia Gertsch, Xerxes Ach: Embracing Sensation* explores what the work of the artist couple, living and working in the Bern Mittelland district, has in common and in what ways it differs.

Light and Color are the Focal Point

The way the exhibition juxtaposes the work of both artists opens up an opportunity to make a tour of contemporary painting since the 1990s, a show that articulates visual experience shaped by the moving images on TV screens and monitors as well as the pallid glow of electronic light. Subject matter is not the important part of their painting, but rather how they paint it and, in doing so, how they produce new moods through color and light. Xerxes Ach achieves this by creating vibrant color spaces without relying on composition, and Silvia Gertsch by capturing a paradise-like utopia that celebrates moments of felicity with intensely radiant light and saturation of color.

The First Joint Exhibition at a Major Swiss Art Institution

With *Silvia Gertsch, Xerxes Ach: Embracing Sensation*, the Kunstmuseum Bern is presenting two artists who have carried away many awards, can boast exhibitions both in Switzerland and worldwide, and who are long firmly integrated in the museum's collection. Despite this background, they have never had a joint exhibition at a major Swiss art institution. Loosely

KUNSTMUSEUM BERN
MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS DE BERNE
MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS BERNE

HODLERSTRASSE 8–12 CH-3000 BERN 7
T +41 31 328 09 44 F +41 31 328 09 55
INFO@KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH WWW.KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH

MEDIEN-SERVICE
SERVICE DE PRESSE / PRESS OFFICE
T +41 31 328 09 19/44
PRESS@KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH

following the trend of the 1990s, the Kunstmuseum Bern is filling this gap with an artist-couple show.

Contact person: Michèle Thüring, michele.thuering@kunstmuseumbern.ch, Tel.: +41 31 328 09 19

Images: Marie Louise Suter, press@kunstmuseumbern.ch, Tel.: +41 31 328 09 53

Exhibition

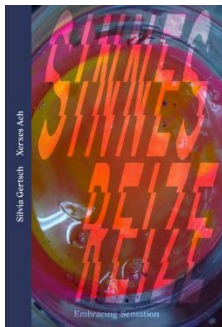
Duration: Oct. 23, 2015 – Feb. 21, 2016

Opening: Thursday, Oct. 22, 2015, 6:30 p.m.

Curator: Kathleen Bühler, curator, Contemporary Art Department, Kunstmuseum Bern

Admission fee: CHF 14.00 / reduced CHF 10.00

Catalogue



Silvia Gertsch, Xerxes Ach: Embracing Sensation

Published by the Kunstmuseum Bern, ed. Kathleen Bühler. With essays by Kathleen Bühler, Matthias Frehner, Anna Friedli, Sarah Merten, Jobst Wagner, and Etienne Wismer. Design by Anna Haas, German and English, bound volume, 248 pages, ca. 200 color plates 17 x 24 cm, 978-3-85881-474-6, CHF 45.00

Poster



F4
89.5 x 128 cm
CHF 20.00

Accompanying Program

Public guided tours: Sunday, 11:00 a.m.: October 25 / November 15 / December 6/27 / January 31 / February 21, and Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.: January 5/26 / February 9, only admission fee required, no bookings necessary

Public Guided Tour with the curator, Kathleen Bühler: Tuesday, November 3, 7:00 p.m., only admission fee required, no bookings necessary

Tour of the exhibition with Xerxes Ach and Etienne Wismer: Tuesday, November 24, 7:00 p.m.

Tour of the exhibition with Silvia Gertsch and Sarah Merten: Tuesday, December 15, 7:00 p.m.

Joint tour of the exhibition with Silvia Gertsch, Xerxes Ach, and the curator, Kathleen Bühler: Sunday, January 17, 11:00 a.m.

Introduction for teachers: Tuesday, October 27, 6:00 p.m., fees: CHF 10.00 per person, bookings:

Tel.: +41 31 328 09 11, vermittlung@kunstmuseumbern.ch

Events for children:

ARTUR Kinder-Kunst-Tour "Schicht um Schicht" (ARTUR Children—Art-Tour "Layer for Layer")

Saturday, November 28 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. for children from 6 to 12 years of age

Sonntag im Museum "Schein" (Sunday at the "light" museum) Sunday, December 13, 11:00 a.m. –

12:30 p.m. Workshop for children aged 6 and over, Fees: per person CHF 10.00, Bookings/Information: Tel.:

+41 31 328 09 11 or vermittlung@kunstmuseumbern.ch

With the generous support of:

CREDIT SUISSE
Partner des Kunstmuseum Bern

Stiftung Gegenwart
Dr. h.c. Hansjörg Wyss

 **Burggemeinde**
Bern

 **Hans Eugen und Margrit Stucki-Liechti Stiftung**

KUNSTMUSEUM BERN
MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS DE BERNE
MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS BERNE

HODLERSTRASSE 8-12 CH-3000 BERN 7
T +41 31 328 09 44 F +41 31 328 09 55
INFO@KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH WWW.KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH

MEDIEN-SERVICE
SERVICE DE PRESSE / PRESS OFFICE
T +41 31 328 09 19/44
PRESS@KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH

