

MARIA MAGDALENA Z'GRAGGEN : *Manatee*

March 13, 2015 – April 28, 2015

Vernissage, Thursday, March 12th, 6 - 8 PM

Maria Magdalena Z'Graggen's first exhibit in the gallery, *Manatee*, is inspired by an oil painting made during a stay in New Mexico in 2001. The vibrant colors in uneven stripes on an off-white background captivate the elusiveness and contrast of the desert, its light, space, colors and hues. The newest works are on colored backgrounds made as a response to an interrupted conversation that is revisited. In this instance it centers on the reintroduction of painting with oil after an interlude of working with installations, watercolor and photography.

Manatee presents a group of nine new paintings and marks the artist's first gallery exhibition with oil on board in ten years. These works reconnect to texture, layers and physicality of color and paint itself. Vertical lines cut through the background, revealing the underlying layers of color, as in an archeological dig revealing the strata of the previous structures. The artist's creative process is deeply rooted in her efforts to understand her environment. Although Z'Graggen is driven to control color and form in her artistic approach, the unexpected results are due to her established working method and are not far from the limits of abstraction. Surprise amorphic spheres appear on turquoise and lemon yellow background, as if floating gems were discovered that reveal their luminosity.

Z'Graggen returns to oil on wood panel after having explored and experimented ways of painting on different surfaces and within the space incorporating film and photography. Between paper and canvas, the artist brings into *Manatee* her affirmation and strength of color and incorporates the past experiences in the new works.

Maria Magdalena Z'Graggen (CH) lives and works in Basel. Her paintings are in the Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art, Roswell, New Mexico, USA, various Swiss collections including Bank Julius Bär, Christoph Merian Stiftung, Kunstkredit Basel-Stadt, Kunstsammlung Baselland, Canton Uri, Cities of Baden and Zürich, Sammlung Nationale Suisse, UBS Art Collection; DSV Kunstkontor, Stuttgart, Germany.

A catalog of her recent works will be published shortly.



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