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## Lonely black abyss

Two young artists are exhibiting under the title "outside in the dark" in the Regensburg Gallery Isabelle Lesmeister: Johanna Strobel and Vesna Bursich.

By Gabriele Mayer, MZ



Johanna Strobel exhibits in the Gallery Lesmeister: Tino Lex

**Regensburg.** Out in the dark: Three plastic chairs and a table, empty, abandoned, two ornamental plant branches long oversized and carnivorous from the right towards it, looking as if their long leaves were sharp and pointed like knives. The painting (oil on canvas) by Johanna Strobel tells a story. Or rather, it animates the viewer to a story that is very much in the way of the uncanny. This is mainly due to the impenetrable blackness that occupies the entire image background and foreground. This unnatural blackness makes the space disoriented and the playing field for the abysmal imagination of the beholder.

On the other hand, the artist points to the surface of her paintings. This is especially true of the pictures in which the smooth black of the oil paint suggests no space on the canvas. Like a wall, this black turns out to be. The plastic look of the chairs also suggests homogeneity and impermeability. Are these images an expression of a modernity, that actually stifles the mysterious profundity of depth originally created, even though today's human beings are constantly referring to the uncanny, especially the crime, making it flicker from any digital screen? Originally, at the beginning of Romanticism, the uncanny and the abysmal were ascribed to each person and to his inner self, so it seems remote and foreign in these pictures.

On three of Johanna Strobel's works are people to be seen in the cane dark as lit by headlights and turn their backs to the observer. One does not recognize them, but can see an event that

may seem a bit scary, but at the same time distant and alien, just reverberating. What remains is painting, expressing states of inaccessibility. Or is there just a kind of youthful reserve of the artist here speaks? Johanna Strobel, born 1984 in Regensburg, studied at the Munich Academy.

The pictures of Vesna Bursich from Turin, born in 1974, live as well from the dark and the mystical. One thinks of the stereotypical images of fortune tellers with magical spheres, when one sees the female, brightly lit figure against a black background and her posture and facial expressions: a figure who, in this series of pictures, does not carry a child, but nature in her transparent ball belly seems. The oil paintings by Vesna Bursich impress through the realism in the representation of the unreal, the dreamlike or the transparent, which one otherwise hardly seems to notice: such as the plastic wrap surrounding an apple. Something ordinary, a nothing is this film that is transfigured.

The exhibition "outside in the dark" can be seen until 15 November in the Gallery Lesmeister (Obermünsterstraße 6 in Regensburg).