

STEFANIA BERETTA
ANNEGRET SOLTAU
Stitched

8. Juli – 10. Oktober 2020 / 8 July – 10 October 2020

For reasons of security there will be no opening.
We are happy to receive your visit singularly.

“As I see it, being nailed down to a single identity is inconsistent, it makes no sense to me that one always has to be ‘oneself’, one’s only self.”
(Annegret Soltau)

Two very different artistic positions – and yet with both exhibited work groups, *Grima* by Annegret **Soltau** (*1946 Lübeck, DE) and *Paesaggi Improbabili* by Stefania **Beretta** (*1957 Vacallo, CH), an encounter takes place between them. One element in particular plays a role here: stitching – oversewing, suturing. The thread becomes a leading component, vocabulary, instrument, stylistic device, distinguishing feature, personal commitment.

Soltau’s career began with etching, drawing, and performance. During that time, the stroke, the line, expanded to become an act, took possession of space and person, to then be drawn out in thread, first by overstitching, later by suturing torn photographs, the subject matter of which is restricted to herself or members of her family.

A comprehensive body of work from the over seventy-year-old feminist icon of art has meanwhile developed, one revolving around the central question of being, the self, identity, female connotations, opinions about the female body – a work which today is appreciated and collected by internationally renowned collections and museums, such as the Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Städel Museum, Frankfurt a/M; and Hamburger Kunsthalle, among many others. The individual is a social factor, a political dimension, and Soltau preserves and cultivates this perspective. Meaning, the image – of the self, of the Other – proves to be, as we know, a construct in need of constant examination, of reassembling anew, healing, appropriating, modifying. Soltau reacts to these phenomena with a sensitive yet rigorous and radical approach. The tears, the thread, the space between the elements, her subject matter all function as a weapon, as debate.

PEMANENT DEMONSTRATION:

An attempt to unleash states of consciousness through the 'realisation' of an image in 'real' life, i.e. to make an image corporeal.

The line, the stroke, becomes a 'realised' line; the person becomes part of the picture. Line and person are no longer two opposing things, rather a 'single reality'.

Demonstration serves no useful purpose, not even aesthetic pleasure; it is to connect, above all, the conscious with the unconscious. I want to work intuitively, i.e. with a directly perceivable experience. One should 'forget oneself'; for as soon as we think about it, consider and form concepts, we lose the original and we confine ourselves through rigid thoughts and fixed concepts.

A state of consciousness is to be achieved through demonstration, which does not disappear from our daily lives but develops there fully. (Annegret Soltau, 1975)

The *Grima* group of works, featured in our exhibition, concerns the transgression of self-limitation, the unification of man and animal, our intertwining, the merging of diverging aspects. Themes such as camouflage, disguise, deception, and Janus-faced characteristics are incorporated, revealing the intention to spark a kind of invocation. Soltau stages the self as a multiple option. Depending on the perspective, a new face appears, or several even. This farsightedness and profundity may be rather surprising considering Soltau forged her artistic activities in this direction in the 1970s, having translated quite a few theories (from Foucault to Butler etc.) into concrete praxis and created an aesthetic strategy for these kinds of discourse, for these ongoing topoi that are more virulent than ever.

In the cycle *Paesaggi Improbabili* (started in 2006), **Beretta**, from the canton of Ticino, also dedicates herself to the interpretation of images, to a shift in the awareness and evaluation of reality. Here photographs of landscapes and nature serve as her stage, elegantly overstitched by machine

or by hand. In the process, motifs that actually do not belong there, creep into the picture. Strange constructs float above the ocean; unexpected symbols and formations spring forth from flora and fauna. For Beretta it is never about epic nature, never about the ideal image, but about non-places, casual occurrences, and unspectacular encounters and views, of bodies of water and trees mainly, which, through the addition of stitching, undergo a disguise, a camouflage, are augmented, annotated, extended. Dimensions are added and shift into the picture: signs and symbols are contrived, which, like surveying, directions, or secretive messages, introduces a poetic codification, lends the motif a lyrical note, or provokes a certain ambience. At the same time, the atmosphere generated by the pause emerges. It is an invitation, to stop, to linger, to explore this proposed way of seeing. You want to find out more. To follow the signs, the connection. The thread spins a bridge, creating points of transition.

In doing so, the 'world of objects' is 'transformed into a world of signs', thus Peter Weibel (in view of Baudrillard's photography). Something similar happens with Beretta. The picture becomes enriched by an agent that ties it between levels of consciousness. Further, it concerns a social, political, we might say, critical perception, without being provocative, without making inflammatory demands, rather a philosophical, spiritual view, for 'landscape is a way of seeing the world' (Denis E. Cosgrove). Man is there, tangible albeit not always visible, and has left his mark. At the same time, landscape, trees, water play a highly symbolic role. Thus, Beretta's reworked photographs are reference points beyond just themselves.

Come si confrontano, in termini di Natura e Cultura, di Vita e Pensiero, di Materia e Immateriale, questi due elementi protagonisti? Restituendo, verosimilmente, a chi guarda, a chi interpreta, uno scenario in cui realtà e immaginario, superficie e profondità, istante e memoria, non cessano di delineare una cartografia ontologico-bio-antropologica dell'essere nel mondo.

How do nature and culture, life and thought, matter and immateriality, these two primary agents, encounter each other? No doubt by restoring to those observing or interpreting a scenario where the imaginary, superficial, and profound, the moment and the memory outline an ontological bio-anthropological cartography of being in the world. (Viana Conti, from our exhibition catalogue).

stefania beretta

Since the early '80s makes trips to Europe, Asia (including India) and America. She began to exhibit in 1985. For the book "Il Ticino e i suoi fotografi" (Ticino and its Photographers) the Swiss Foundation of Photography in the year 1987 chose a report, realized on one of her journeys through India, entitled Rito di cremazione (Crematory ritual).

1991 the Swiss Italian TV station dedicated her the film report "ritratto di una fotografa" (portrait of a photographer).

Thanks to the scholarship awarded by Visarte, the year 1994 leads her to stay for six months at the Cité Internationale des Arts of Paris: out of this experience, in 1997 results the publication of Paris noir (for the edition of the magazine Pagine d'arte, Lugano-Milano).

1995 she got the first prize in a photography competition organized by the Società Ticinese di Belle Arti (Society of the fine art, Ticino).

1997 the Foundation Galleria Gottardo, Lugano, realizes an interesting initiative giving out a mandate to the European photographers to document the Gotthard. Stefania Beretta created suggestive images entitled "Sud-Nord". The initiative will be the subject of a touring exhibition accompanied by an important catalogue with the title Il San Gottardo.

1998 she got invited at the Cultural Center Europos Parkas of Vilnius (Lithuania) to accomplish a personal work of her. In the same year, she received a national scholarship from the Foundation Gleyre (Switzerland). Since 1980 she frequently travels through Europe, Asia and the Americas; Città d'Europa (Cities of Europe) edited 1998 by CGA&P Lugano, contains a lot of images of these journeys which show her way of being.

2000 the publishing house Trans Photographic Press Paris published her book rooms, a work successively exposed at different European galleries. 2002 the same house published the book Trop (too much) and 2006 the book In Memoriam.

Since 2001 she works on the project The Rolex Mentor & Protégé Arts Initiative commissioned by Rolex, following and documenting the encounters of some of the most important contemporary artists and young talents of the world.

2004 SRG SSR Idée Suisse (Swiss Broadcasting Company) realizes PhotoSuisse in cooperation with the Swiss Foundation of Photography and the editor Lars Müller; it is a movie-portrait with an important publication of 28 Swiss photographers which transforms itself in collaboration with the Pro Helvetia Foundation into a travelling exhibition.

From her frequent journeys through India arises a small but precious publication called Indiarasoterra, realized at the occasion of the exhibition of the gallery Cons Arc in Chiasso.

2005 she got a scholarship from the Foundation Landis&Gyr of Zug for a stay of six month at the studio in London.

2006 on invitation of the Credito Valtellinese Foundation and the agency Grazia Neri, she photographs the marble quarries in Sicily and Marco Anelli (photographer of Rome) the quarries in Valtellina. The work entitled Cave (quarries), will be shown in a travelling exhibition and a book will be published also.

The Bogliasco Foundation, the Liguria Study Center for the Arts and Humanities Genoa, grants one month Fellowships to Stefania Beretta during the semester autumn-winter 2009.

In 2010 on invitation of Foundation Credito Valtellinese Sondrio, she realizes some images on the theme of the Rhaetian Railways for a publication accompanied by a traveling exhibition.

In 2011 she was invited to exhibit with internationally renowned photographers in the exhibition Eyes on Paris at the Deichtorhallen in Hamburg.

The same exhibition in 2015 is on display at the Kunstmuseum Pablo Picasso Münster.

In 2016 the Municipal Art Museum of Ascona dedicated a solo exhibition entitled "Una segnaletica dell'Essere".

Since 1985 she is regularly exhibiting her works in Switzerland as well as in the rest of Europe. Her photographs are now part of many public (e.g. Paris Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, the Swiss Photography Foundation) and private collections.

www.stefaniaberetta.ch

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 Galerie Monika Wertheimer, Oberwil/CH
2016 Museo Comunale d'Arte, Ascona / CH
2015 Maurer Zilioli Contemporary Arts, Monaco / D
2014 Galerie Monika Wertheimer, Oberwil / CH
2011 MIA Fair Milano, Maurer Zilioli Contemporary Arts Brescia / I
2010 Galleria Balmelli, Bellinzona / CH
Maurer Zilioli, Contemporary Arts, Brescia / I
2009 Galleria UnimediaModern, Genova / I
Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano / CH
2007 Credito Siciliano, Acireale / I
Fondazione San Antonio, Noli / I
Museo Palazzo Sertoli, Sondrio / I
Galerie Beck&Eggeling, Düsseldorf / D
2006 Galleria Palladio, Lugano / CH
2004 Galleria Beck&Eggeling, Düsseldorf / D
Galleria CONS ARC, Chiasso / CH
Espace Abraham Joly, Ginevra / CH
Kunst Forum Rottweil / D
2003 Galleria Belmont, Flims / CH
2002 Galleria, SpazioFoto, Firenze / I
Casorella, Locarno / CH
2001 Villa Pavoni, Lottigna / CH
2000 La Rada, Locarno / CH
Galleria, Zwischenraum bei Scalo, der Schweizerischen
Stiftung für die Photographie, Zurigo / CH
Galleria, La Chambre Claire, Parigi / F
1998 Galleria, SPSAS, Locarno / CH
1997 Galleria, Pagine d'Arte, Lugano / CH
1996 Galleria, Art Photographique, Ginevra / CH
1994 Spazio XXI, Bellinzona / CH
1991 Galleria Odeonart, Biasca / CH
1987 Musée Municipale de St. Paul de Vence / F
1986 Galleria, Saqqârah, Gstaad / CH

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

- Musinf Senigallia / I
Museo comunale d'arte moderna, Ascona / CH
MASI, Lugano / CH
Fondazione Svizzera per la fotografia Winterthur / CH
Fondazione Festival Photo, La Gacilly / F
Fondazione Credito Valtellinese, Milano / I
Fonds Cantonal de décoration et arts visuel Ginevra / CH
Fondo Cantonale della Cultura Ticino / CH
Collezione di opere d'arte del comune di Chiasso / CH
Centre Pompidou, Paris / F
Bibliothèque Nationale Paris / F
Musée Carvalet Paris / F
Collezione Fondo Comunale Carlo Cotti Lugano / CH

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Ente Ospedaliero Cantonale Ospedale Italiano Lugano / CH
Banca del Gottardo *Collezione di fotografia*, Lugano / CH
BSI, *Collezione di fotografia*, Lugano / CH
Banca dello Stato di Chiasso / CH
Credit Suisse Chiasso, Bellinzona, Ascona, Lugano, Zurigo / CH
UBS Chiasso / CH
Banca Cial Locarno / CH
Banca Raiffeisen, Acquarossa / CH

AWARDS

2009 Borsa di Studio Fondazione Bogliasco, Genova / I
2005 Borsa di studio Landis&Gyr, London / GB
1998 Centro culturale Europos Parkas, Vilnius / PL
Borsa federale Gleyre / CH
1995 Primo premio Società Belle Arti Lugano / CH
1994 Cité Internationale des Arts Paris / F

Annegret Soltau:

1946 geboren in Lüneburg

1962-66 Arbeit in verschiedenen Berufen u.a. im OP bei einem Unfallarzt am Hafen in Hamburg

1967-72 Studium der Malerei und Grafik an der Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Hamburg, bei den Professoren Hans Thiemann, Kurt Kranz, Rudolf Hausner, Alan Jones und David Hockney

1972 Studium in der Meisterklasse der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien bei Professor Anton Lehmden

1973 Stipendium des DAAD für Mailand/Italien

1975 erste Fotoübernahmen / **1976** erste Fotoradierungen / **1977** erste Fotovernahmen

1982 Werkstipendium des Kunstfonds eV., Bonn

1984 Stipendium Villa Massimo, Rom / **1986-87** Villa Massimo Aufenthalt, Rom

1986 Preisträgerin des Wettbewerbs "Kunst im Öffentlichen Raum", Zentralkrankenhaus, Bremen

1989-90 Arbeitsstipendium des Kunstfonds eV., Bonn

1998 Maria Sibylla Merian Preis, Hessisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kunst, Wiesbaden

2000 Wilhelm-Loth-Preis, Kunstpreis der Stadt Darmstadt

2011 Marielies Hess-Kunstpreis, Frankfurt a.M.

2016 Johann-Heinrich-Merck-Ehrung der Stadt Darmstadt

Mitglied Darmstädter Sezession / Deutscher Künstlerbund, Berlin / Deutsche Fotografische Akademie, Leinfelden

Lehraufträge, Workshops und Vorträge: Hochschule für Gestaltung, Offenbach a. M. / Fachhochschule Bielefeld / Universität Köln / Internationale Sommerakademie für Bildende Kunst, Salzburg / Universität, Flensburg / Technische Universität, Darmstadt / Johannes Gutenberg Universität, Mainz / Kunstakademie Braunschweig / Hochschule Darmstadt / Freie Akademie Nürtingen / Institut für Philosophie Darmstadt / Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main / Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst, Leipzig

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1946 born in Lüneburg, Germany; **1967-72** Studied painting and graphic arts at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste (University of Fine Arts) in Hamburg with Hans Thiemann, Kurt Kranz, Rudolf Hausner, Alan Jones and David Hockney; **1972** Attended the masterclass at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien (Vienna Academy of Fine Arts) with Anton Lehmden; **1973** German Academic Exchange Service scholarship to study in Milan, Italy; since **1975** Performance, photography and videos; first photo overstichings in **1975**, first photo etchings in **1976**, first restitched photos in **1977**; **1982** Fellowship from the Kunstfonds (Art Foundation), Bonn; **1984** Villa Massimo scholarship, Rome; **1986** Winner of the Kunst im Öffentlichen Raum (Art in Public Spaces) competition, Zentralkrankenhaus (Central Hospital), Bremen; **1986-87** Residence fellowship at Villa Massimo, Rome; **1989-90** Fellowship from the Kunstfonds (Art Foundation), Bonn; **1998** Maria Sibylla Merian Prize in the state of Hesse; **2000** Wilhelm Loth Prize (art prize awarded by the City of Darmstadt); **2011** Marielies Hess Art Prize, Frankfurt am Main; **2016** Johann-Heinrich-Merck-Honor by the City of Darmstadt

Membership Darmstädter Sezession (artists' association in Darmstadt); Deutscher Künstlerbund (Association of German Artists), Berlin; Fotografische Akademie (German Photographic Association), Leinfelden

Teaching, Workshops and lectures at the Hochschule für Gestaltung (University of Design), Offenbach am Main; Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences; University of Cologne; International Summer Academy of the Fine Arts, Salzburg (AT); University of Darmstadt; Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz; Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences; Academy of Art, Nürtingen; Institute of Philosophy Darmstadt and Goethe University Frankfurt am Main; Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig

works in public collection

Kunsthalle Bremen
Fraunhofer Institut, Darmstadt
Polizeipräsidium, Darmstadt
Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt
City art collection, Darmstadt
City art collection, Frankfurt
Deutsche Bank collection, Frankfurt
Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg
Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg
Kunsthalle zu Kiel
City art collection, Leinfelden
International Art Collection Junij, Arhitekturni Muzej, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen
City art collection, Mainz
Kulturreferat of the city of Munich
City art collection, Rüsselsheim
Video art collection of the city of Salzgitter
Schleswig-Holsteinisches Landesmuseum, Schloß Gottorf, Schleswig
City art collection, Schwäbisch Hall
Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart
Graphic art collection of the Universität Trier
Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts, Vienna
Kunsthalle Wilhelmshaven
City art collection, Wolfsburg
Städtische Kunsthalle, Mannheim
DZ Bank collection, Frankfurt
THE VERO GROUP collection, Houston, Texas
VERBUND collection, Vienna
Hochheimer Artcollection, Hochheim am Main

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Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA
Archive Artist Publications, München
Collezione La Gaia, Busca CN, Italy
ICP – International Center of Photography, New York, USA
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, UK
Centre Pompidou, Paris, France

Public archives:

Archive Artist Publications, Munich
Archiv der Akademie der Künste, Berlin
(Verein der Berliner Künstlerinnen 1867 e. V. – VdBK)
FrauenMediaTurm, Feministisches Archiv, Cologne
Hessisches Staatsarchiv, Darmstadt
Kunstarchiv, Darmstadt
Mediathek ZKM, Karlsruhe

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