

BETHAN HUWS *Works on Paper*

October 26–December 8, 2018

Bethan Huws' second solo exhibition at the Barbara Gross Galerie features works on paper created by the artist over the course of twenty years. From the outset, watercolours and drawings have represented an autonomous component in the oeuvre of the Welsh conceptual artist. For Huws, drawing signifies an intimate form of thinking and remembering, allowing reflections on her own life and artistic creation as well as her art-historical research to flow into her works.

Huws' delicate watercolours take up impressions of nature going back to her native, rural North Wales. Here, abstract figures generated with fine brushstrokes recall branched tree structures, the wavy lines of a stream, or sea urchins. The motifs seem to float on the largely empty page, and remain unlocalised, detached from their original context.

Huws' artistic practice spans the realms of nature, art, and language. Where thinking and creating are intimately intertwined. This becomes particularly evident in her drawings, which play with words and images. For instance, using a green coloured pencil, she titles a drawn rectangle *Marcel Duchamp*, thereby invoking a wealth of references and distinctions: from the literal translation of the artist's last name (French 'of the field') to all the different meanings that the term 'field' can have in this context, which includes Huws' own biography.

With the work titled *Raymond Roussel*, 2008, Huws isolates a fragment of research by the art historian Michèle Humbert that links the name of the French surrealist writer Raymond Roussel with Marcel Duchamp's readymade *bicycle wheel* (French: *roue* = wheel, *selle* = stool). The drawing quotes the famous work and juxtaposes it with a female nude as an allegory of nature, seated on a stool.

With curved lines, as in drawings like *Untitled*, 1996, that wind in opposite directions around a straight line, Huws traces the path that Duchamp would hypothetically have taken to transform a urinal into his famous *Fountain*. In her work, these spiral forms become symbols of contemplative motion and a shift in perception.

A group of editions supplementing the exhibition particularly highlights language as a central aspect of, and an important instrument in Huws' work, and is directly related to Duchamp. Huws has studied the artist's thinking and work intensively over the last ten years. In its logic, Huws' art is closely related to that of Duchamp: she also sets up a complex network of references, riddles, and small changes in meaning in which language, object, and image exist on equal footing.

BETHAN HUWS, born 1961 in Bangor, Wales, UK, lives and works in Berlin.

Selected exhibitions: Kunsthaus Zug, 2018; Bündner Kunstmuseum Chur, 2018; Kolumba Kunstmuseum, Cologne, 2016; Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, 2015; Kunstmuseum Bern, 2014; Kunsthaus Zug, 2013; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 2011; Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 2011; Museum Ludwig, Cologne, 2010, Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover, 2010; Tate Britain, London, 2010; Serralves Museum, Porto, 2009; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, 2007; Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht, 2006; Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 2003; Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, 2001; Lenbachhaus, Munich, 2000.