

Press Release
Basel, 22 August 2022

Vivian Suter

soft and fluffy is my soul – my tommy juices don't worry – are sweet like a liquorice roll

24 September 2022 – 1 October 2023, Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart
Curator: Maja Wismer

The Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart joins forces with the Argentinian-Swiss painter Vivian Suter to stage an immersive presentation of those among the artist's works that date from the early 1980s through to the present day.

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1949, Vivian Suter moved to Basel with her family at the age of thirteen. Here she studied painting at the former Kunstgewerbeschule and, as a young artist, would hold regular exhibitions of her work. She later settled in Panajachel, Guatemala, in 1982. The motivic reference to her subtropical surroundings has since been evident in her work.

Her early work in conceptual art was later followed in the first half of the 80's by expressive, gestural painting. Suter began by applying thick layers of colour onto hand-cut paper, which she then assembled, collage-like, to form polygonal pictorial surfaces. She would later repeat this expressive language of forms in her large-format – in part intensely luminous, in part earthy and natural – paintings on canvas. In recent years, Suter has opted to leave her canvases unframed. When the tropical storm Agatha flooded her archive with mud in 2010, Suter decided to leave the traces of nature as a feature of her paintings. In doing so, she breaks to some degree with the traditional notion of controlling authorship, thereby allowing external factors, such as humidity, light, flora and fauna to exert a formative influence in her painting. What is depicted, the forces and structures of Guatemala's exuberant subtropical nature, in tandem with the artist's painterly manner, become the driving force in her paintings.

The system she devised for best storing the loose canvases in the climate of her adopted home, also informs the way in which Suter exhibits her paintings today: canvases suspended from the ceiling at varying heights, most of them loosely distributed around the space. Furthermore, in her presentations she arranges the canvases in close

proximity, thus allowing them to overlap. The visitors thus quite literally wander through Suter's paintings, physically immersing themselves in an atmospheric, densely layered work of forms, colours and the traces of weather.

Following a relatively calm period between the 1990s and early 2000s, Suter made a highly esteemed appearance at the 2017 Documenta 14 in Athens, with her free-hanging canvases in outdoor spaces. Her work has since been displayed in New York, Toronto, Los Angeles, Berlin, Madrid, London and, most recently, in Lucerne, in 2021. The last exhibition in Basel was held at the Kunsthalle in 2014.

The works selected for presentation at the Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart are drawn from the artist's studio and repository, the holdings of the Zurich gallery Karma International, and the collections of the Galerie Stampa, the Ricola Collection, Laufen, and Kunstcredit Basel.

Images and Information on the Exhibition

www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch/medien

Media Contact

Karen N. Gerig, Tel. +41 61 206 62 80, karen.gerig@bs.ch