

Press release

November 19th
December 24th, 2022Opening
Saturday, November 19th
from 11am to 8pm

Head in the Clouds

Aneta Kajzer

Semiose gallery is delighted to present a solo show dedicated to the German painter Aneta Kajzer, whose work is defined by her focus on color, while exploiting the drama of light conditions and playing on its own potential for multiple interpretations. Her painting blends abstract and semi-abstract elements. The “semi” is important here because it does not imply the use of figurative elements and the surfaces and forms of her paintings defy any unambiguous reading. Faces and figures the viewer might perceive, become spots and specks again with the next brushstroke and areas of color become storm clouds or natural features at the blink of an eye.

Beings play a prominent role and appear in the form of faces. Often, they are just discrete dots and brushstrokes that suggest eyes and mouths. In *Halunken (Scoundrels)*, the artist has placed two light green dots on white spots. This minimal addition is enough to persuade the human mind to see eyes and the rest of the face that goes with them. It is a natural function of the human brain to seek out living beings in the surrounding world, whether they are enemy or friend, whether they appear in a wallpaper pattern or the smoke of a cigarette. The nose of the scoundrel is more elaborate: it is more like a trunk or a penis-nose, erect and upwards-pointing. The pinkish coloring emphasizes the allusion to the sexual organ. It is a happy penis in a sunny, yellow bubble. It is surrounded on one side by a sky, which could also be an ocean, and on the other by red hills reminiscent of cacti or perhaps a melting ice-cream. The canvas as a whole, gives of a watery or fluid impression. This is a new approach from Aneta Kajzer, who in her previous cycles of painting created darker and heavier spaces with deeper purple and blue tones.

For the exhibition “Head In The Clouds,” she has created a series of new paintings that appear lighter and more like watercolors. The dark skies of her earlier works are now fractured with white breaking through in many places. As in her darker paintings, color is of primary importance, appearing in a flow of sweeping brushstrokes and swirls, so typical of her work that they form a distinctive signature. The canvas is not covered in short strokes as with the Impressionists, nor in smears like the Neo-expressionists, but is filled with broad and dynamic brushwork. These great sweeps keep everything in motion and preclude purely figurative painting, while at the same time tickling purely abstract painting until it twists and turns and new figures emerge. With great virtuosity, the loose brushstrokes lead to a composition. They form the structure of each surface and set the stage for the colors, intensifying their luminosity while at the same time creating the discernable contours of imagined characters.

Aneta Kajzer begins each painting with the canvas laid out on the floor and only hangs it on a wall for the later stages of her work. The figures are not planned in advance, nor are their faces added at the end of her composition. They are born naturally as the painting progresses. Her current palette of pastel colors brings to mind Maria Lassnig, one of Kajzer’s great inspirations. Miriam Cahn’s oeuvre, where ghost-like heads emerge from intensely colored backgrounds, is also a reference for the artist.

Press release

November 19th
December 24th, 2022

Opening
Saturday, November 19th
from 11am to 8pm

Aneta Kajzer's pictorial worlds are rooted in nature. The weather, skies, universe and earthly fauna are born from color. The painting *Über den Wolken (Above the Clouds)* is a wonderfully dynamic composition. A sphere of orange and red fades to black in the top right-hand corner of the canvas, while in the center, swirls of light blue clouds build up. This is however not a storm in the making, but a friendly cloud floating by, accompanying the viewer below. The orange mouth and dark blue eyes seem benevolent, even though the passing cloud's momentum appears to vigorously whip up the air and water. On the center-left of the canvas, the clouds and orange sphere pull away from each other and a large white surface remains blank. Yet between these natural elements this white space suddenly seems as deep as the blackest of nights—a powerful dramaturgical flourish.

In *Sommersturm (Summer Storm)* a different energy is brewing. The vast emptiness is taken up by approaching storm clouds. At the bottom, on the right-hand side of the canvas a cyclone pushes upwards, while from above, a sheet of blue fading into the yellow, reminds us of a curtain of rain. Also on the right, a patch of intense olive green becomes darker yet also seems to be lit from behind. A dirty, menacing yellow sets the scene for a summer thunderstorm.

Sirens could easily be a night-time seascape: the center of the canvas represents the surface of the sea and an orange glow in the sky becomes a purple figure under the water.

Not all of Aneta Kajzer's works however, can be interpreted as depictions of natural spectacles. Some, like *Muggy*, seem to reveal a dream sequence. In this painting, a kind of specter with orange hair and a yellow face flickers through the color. On the left-hand side of the canvas, lighter-colored, finger-painted swirls of cloud are set in motion. Yet smaller whirls in pastel tones have a creamier appearance. They too have been structured by the artist's finger-tips.

The embodiment of colors—as beings, ghosts and natural or meteorological elements—is typical of Aneta Kajzer's visual language. Often the characters are shown as melancholic, brooding or in flight. They are always set in a dramatic staging of light and darkness, depth and shadow or of air and sky. Abstraction of course is the dominant factor, yet the variety of interpretative possibilities that arise from small touches such as those forming the faces, is quite astonishing. There is however no question of either / or in terms of abstraction or figuration. If in the 20th century the opposition between abstract and figurative painting gave rise to passionate debate, today we live in an era that admits hybrid boundaries in personal style. Rigorous classifications have become outdated. Aneta Kajzer playfully demonstrates the freedom afforded to contemporary painting: bringing together whatever the painting asks for, painting what it needs and what it wants.

Larissa Kikol

Larissa Kikol (b. 1986) is a freelance art critic and art scholar. She writes for *Die Zeit*, *art – das Kunstmagazin*, *Kunstzeitung*, *Monopol Online*, and *Kunstforum International*, among others. In 2016, she won the C/O Amerikahaus international Talents competition for art criticism. In 2021, she received a writer's grant from the German state of NRW. She teaches and lectures in Germany and France at art colleges and universities. Her dissertation *Tollste Kunst (Greatest Art)* was published by transcript Verlag in 2017. She lives and works in Marseille and Cologne.