

KUNSTVEREIN BIELEFELD  
PRESSE

Welle 61  
33602

PRESS

Do - So, 12:00 - 18:00  
Mo - Mi, nach Vereinbarung

PRESS INFORMATION

Sequoia Scavullo  
*The Taste of Your Fireplace*  
12.11. - 15.01.2023

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*The Taste of Your Fireplace* is the first institutional solo exhibition of Sequoia Scavullo in Europe. Born in Baltimore in 1995, the artist lives and works in Paris. She graduated from the Beaux Arts of Paris in 2022. Sequoia Scavullo creates in varying formats figurative paintings, that are on the edge of abstraction. Elements of fantastic creatures, body parts or flying insects blur in a superimposition of layers representing textures such as water, hair or transparent fabric.

Central to her work is a reflection on non-verbal communication. The creation of an imaginary alphabet, which one encounters often in her painting like for example in *Sequoyah's Doubled Edged Sword* (2022), makes this literally the theme. The hieroglyphic-like letters both convey real messages, and often break into pure nonsense and abstraction. In this way, the artist generates a new state of language while reminding us that painting, as an artistic language, has the ability to convey emotions that are sometimes more complex than words could express. Likewise, Scavullo uses color as a mediator of emotional states and refers to the synesthetic realms of experience in art, especially painting. Strong light contrasts and a nuanced play with color gradations underline this. In his *Farbenlehre* (1810), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe analyzes the effect of colors on human perception and concludes that colors - which come from the spectrum of light - are associated with emotions. In this respect, Sequoia Scavullo seems to be in the artistic tradition of both Georgia O'Keeffe and Bridget Riley.

Scavullo does not devote herself to the simplest of emotions, for her work is actually about a dialogue between love and death, two major themes that are linked, among other things, by mourning. To find mourning, not in the sense of saying goodbye, but in the sense of a new life with the absent and to visualize a commemoration of the love felt. With this, existential questions emerge, such as what relationship and methods of non verbal communication do we have with someone we have lost and loved? Where do our feelings go? If they still exist, what do we do with them?

Scavullo's compositions repeatedly refer to her personal history and dreams. Coming from a Taino family, she has been inspired by their technique of dream analysis - dream and waking states are not distinguished among the Taino - and their holistic approach to the world. This understanding considers the constitution of the human being as a whole, not detaching the mind from the body as it is often the case in Western medicine, in order to heal it. It is therefore no coincidence that water is a recurring theme in her work. This material represents as such the fluidity between reality and dream, between life and death, between past and present, and also between the non-human and human worlds.

Through memory, engagement and, in the case of painting, making visible an existential inner world, Scavullo gives a place to the invisible and unspeakable. Therein lies the generosity and strength of Sequoia Scavullo's painting, to make tangible that which in our Western society attempts to claim a right to exist, but is repeatedly thwarted by rationality.

Curated by Oriane Durand