

In her sixth solo exhibition at Galerie Gisela Capitain, Maria Brunner celebrates a festival of painting. Central to the exhibition is a series of medium format floral still lifes, each showing the inflorescence of one, or a maximum of two, white amaryllis.

In the series, the artist remains faithful to her painting style. As usual, all works are executed in a photorealistic manner. However, this time there is no overlapping of images, no surrealist shifting of perspective – neither in form nor content – but rather a clear representation of a single motif in different variations; always presented in a neutral space, defined solely by color.

This thematic concentration projects painting itself into the foreground. Brunner intentionally uses the restriction of subject and palette as a focus with which to show the polyvalent nature of painting all the more clearly. One is surprised by the range of the color spectrum despite the singularity of motif, as Brunner says.

The isolated motif also leads to an abstraction of representation that transcends the purely figurative and allows fundamental structures to emerge.

The tension between the figurative and the abstract, between concentration and variety, is buttressed by the motif itself. The paintings are still lifes in the truest sense of the word. They are still, and at the same time they are full of life. As in Karl Blossfeldt's *Urformen der Kunst*, they seem to possess the energy of life, as if the flower could open at any instant. This impression is formally reinforced by a deliberately employed blurriness that suggests movement and opens the paintings to the broadest possible array of readings.

The tension maintained by these individual canvases runs through the exhibition like a thread. On the whole, the images, with their varying states of development, seem like a time lapse, but upon closer inspection the actual blossoming, the moment of sublime beauty, is missing. It is present in every picture nonetheless, either as the possibility of things to come, or the possibility of things that were and are now succumbing to entropy.

The artist chooses the motif of the flower consciously, in full knowledge of the art historical context that she is navigating, but the history of the floral still life and its possible symbolism are non-factors in this decision. For Brunner, the flower is much more neutral, something that accompanies our everyday lives.

In the end, the theme of painting is broken by the two pieces of jewelry that complete the exhibition; a ring and a necklace, both designed by the artist. The presentation of these two pieces represents the first official appearance of Brunner's "alter ego" Mizzl (Viennese for Maria), through whom she refers to her painted world and extends it to a sculptural level.