

Press release

Meret Oppenheim

Zeichnungen mit Tisch, co-curated by Jacqueline Burckhardt

11 June – 16 July 2022

Opening 10 June, 6 – 9 pm

Show me the place in the clouds where the swallow's wing opened. (M.O. 1944)

Zeichnungen mit Tisch, the second exhibition of Meret Oppenheim (Berlin 1913 - Basel 1985) at Karma International, presents works on paper created over a period of 52 years, i.e. during her entire artistic career: ink drawings, pastels, watercolors, lithographs, woodcuts and linocuts, as well as etchings.

The selection and hanging are inspired, among other things, by one of her poems from 1980 entitled *Selbstporträt seit 50'000 Jahre v. Chr bis X*: "My feet stand on stones rounded by many steps in a dripstone cave. I let myself taste the bear meat...", she writes in it. Full of curiosity she lived in the present, but saw herself integrated in the immensely long history of evolution and thought far beyond the limits of what could be experienced. In pictures and writings she reflects – also as a C.G. Jung connoisseur – the boundless spatiotemporal dimensions of the reference fields of the unconscious. Many sheets, which seem like incidental chamber pieces, circle around the still vague, incomprehensible, fragile at the threshold of the designed, of form.

In her more mature years, Meret Oppenheim became a role model and an iconic figure for many artists and intellectuals. This flattered her, but it also amused her. In 1980, she applied a "ritual tribal painting" to a photograph of her face using a stencil and spray, thus self-ironically presenting herself as a shaman.

Meret Oppenheim designed light-hearted things for her everyday life or created extravagant fashion accessories, for Elsa Schiaparelli in the 1930s, for example. She drew tables, lamps and chairs. In 1982, she designed the *Tisch für Jacqueline*, commenting that it did not have to be plain and simple. The design was realized by the architect Michael Burckhardt in Milan in 1983, and Meret Oppenheim decided that it should be produced in an edition of 20 copies.

Meret Oppenheim loved conviviality in a stimulating circle. In her family home in Carona, she created many *Cadavres exquis* drawings, five of which hang in the staircase of the gallery. In this popular game of the surrealists, several people take part in each session, continuing to draw what previous players have designed and folded, leaving only minimal hints visible in each case, to which the next person adds his or her own fantasy.

We thank Flavia Vogel for the concept of the specific wall painting in the exhibition.

Meret Oppenheim has a retrospective entitled *Meret Oppenheim. My Exhibition* that is currently touring, which started at Kunstmuseum Bern in 2021, is now on view at Menil Collection, Houston, and will continue on to the Museum of Modern Art, New York later this year and into 2023.