

KATZ CONTEMPORARY

“Botanical Madness” at the KATZ CONTEMPORARY gallery

The work "Botanischer Wahnsinn" (Botanical Madness) by Joseph Beuys is an expression of humanity's efforts to fathom the essence of nature. In the 1960s, with his extended concept of art, this Düsseldorf-based artist altered and influenced the way natural materials were dealt with, as well as the way art reflected on nature, with lasting effect. Within the human being resides a deeply rooted need to define its own relationship with nature. The attempt to identify possible (conceptual) places and traces of human existence in the world of flora and fauna, which surrounds us proves however to be an audacious venture; the convinced efforts of the researcher comes to a hold before the stubbornness of biological phenomenon. Humans bend themselves down and search in the rampantly growing grass the solution of its mystery (Joseph Beuys, Botanical Madness, 1976).

The artists chosen for the “Botanical Madness” exhibition have their own way to deal with forms, rampant growths and branching found into nature. So is for the artistic duo **Lutz&Guggisberg** the fundamental need to consider housing as a shelter in and outside nature as they show with their work “Tierwelthütte”, 2008 (Animal world hut). Roughly cobbled together with wood slats, the walls of the hut are disguised with shredded newspapers or announcements. These leftovers appear here like tracks referring to the urban habitat and enable us to sway towards a secure civilised environment. Fastened to the external walls of the shed, the notes and signs of nature function at the same time as a halt before the protecting interior.

In the work of **huber.huber** one can see a similar history of creation with the fantastic blooming world of “Mikrokosmos” (Microcosms), materialised this time in the form of minute collages. Although modern in its occurrence, the human figure in these landscapes doesn't appear as alienated from nature; humans, tigers and butterflies face each other on the same level before the monumental background of eternal mountains. On plants, humans and animals lies the precious charm of fugacity. The biological cycle works despite the presence of humans without being disturbed by its interferences. Realised by the same artists, is the series “Handhabungen” (Handling) showing another aspect of how one may look at nature, once it has been handled by men. Taking scientific experiments as a basis for the elaboration of this group of work, huber.huber clearly attest of the effects and consequences of the human intervention on plants or even animals.

In **Claudia Wieser's** botanical works only remains the trace of human activity. Filigree medals made of golden leaves praise the beauty and elegance of the organic form. The adaptation of geometrical lines found into nature by humans, witnesses the fascination and respect of its wondrous variety. Humans do not fatigue in their will to understand the natural world. Within all the ramifications of science, nature doesn't seem to want to deliver its last secret. All over the lucky and failed efforts of the spirit, nature nevertheless always remains a source of life and power.

The Dandelion pictures in the work of **Martin Walde**, gleamed with warm light, words and meanings slosh over a blooming sea, reflexion and sensation won't be divided ever.

Jana Jakoubek-Novotny