

## ALL DAYS COMBINED

Monika Müller / Dianna Frid

October 13 - November 24, 2018

The artists Monika Müller and Dianna Frid met in 2011. Since then, they have been engaged in a conversation that enhances both friendship and practice. Aware of the geographical distance between them—Müller lives in Lucerne, Switzerland and Frid in Chicago, USA—both have come to regard their respective cities as sites of mutual artistic examination or, at the very least, sites where their works have appeared side by side. Earlier this year they had a show at Goldfinch Projects in Chicago, and now here in Lucerne.

The title *All Days Combined* alludes to two separate strands of work that share points of reference. The exhibition brings together for the first time pieces shown alongside each other by each artist. Monika Müller presents large format graphite drawings from the new *Spectrum* Series. Dianna Frid contributes with two artist's books and works from the *Text-Textiles* Series, all of which integrate sewn words that emerges from and are merged with drawing and montage.

Monika Müller's ample and bright studio is located on the outskirts of Lucerne where the last shopping malls meet the area's farms. During a recent visit there, I encountered residues of fine graphite dust everywhere: on the floor, on the stacked books, and soon on the soles of my shoes. This gray powder, almost invisible to the naked eye, is palpable when you run your fingers over the tabletop. Graphite is Müller's medium of choice and she uses it fully in this new body of work.

Müller's drawing tools consist of foam coated spatulas that she uses like brushes to work graphite dust layer by layer into the dense surface of thick paper. In this way, Müller's *Spectrum* series is more gesturally painterly than it is graphic. This series is the result of months of work with this powdery medium. One perceives the matter of graphite as much as it becomes the representation of haze in a picture. This gradually yields to thunderclouds, moons or suns shimmering within and through it. Galaxies with unknown stars open up and reveal views onto wide expanses. While in Müller's earlier works photographs of clouds served as a starting point, she has never moved as freely from the templates as in the series shown here. The pictures can also be read more abstractly, if the

cloud theme is superficially apparent, then it can also be lost again on closer inspection.

Monika Müller describes her approach as less focused on the source material but more instinctive, it is guided by what becomes apparent in the process. This becomes evident if one thinks of Müller's great work cycle of the last years, *[The] World [as an Ordered Whole] I - III*, where she graphically transposed collected pictures from newspaper reports about environmental catastrophes and destroyed nature.

So, *Spectrum* is less a precise mapping than a new way of taking distance, as if the artist had lifted her gaze, away from the landscape, and now up into the sky, contemplating the cosmology, as another order—or chaos—in which our world moves.

Texere is the Latin root of the words text and textile; it means „to weave“. The shared origin or writing of weaving reveals that textiles have been textual codes from the very beginning. This is a key point of reference in Dianna Frid's work. In her process and output she heightens the material aspects of writing.

Her process is deliberately slow and meditative. She em-broiders letter by letter, she builds words into cloth, and she creates phrases within patterns that both reveal and hide what is written. These are acts of encoding. Using graphite, colored pencil, metal sheets, and other mediums, Frid's letters and backgrounds oscillate and connect. One may wonder: what is in front? What is behind? What came first, language or pattern? These questions, meant to remain unanswered, become part of the content of the work. In the eyes of the observer, words or fragments of text slowly form, they release themselves from their surroundings gradually. Reading Frid's *Void*, the letters are faintly visible in the graphite circle at the center of the pictorial space: void swallows the word. Or is it the other way around?

Rhythm plays a major role in Frid's patterns as much as in her process. Yet rhythm also refers to the non-linguistic aspects of language, as in the rhythms of poetry that mark time. In Frid's work *Rhythm is*

*the Fundamental Force #2 (after Mayakovsky)* Frid quotes the Russian modernist poet who affirmed that rhythm is the fundamental energy of verse. While referencing the poetic, Dianna Frid follows multivalent tracks. Starting from the longstanding techniques of writing and weaving, she reflects on time and its different scales (human and cosmic, for instance): the words *Spinning and Dyeing* in a diptych, are embedded within accumulated graphite triangles and diagonal bands. In the English word „dyeing“ one also recognizes the word “dying.” We live, spin, are woven, and die as we are caught within cosmic turns.

Layer by layer, the two artists Dianna Frid and Monika Müller superimpose, build or remove material, while combining yesterday with today, the rising and falling, and most of what holds together the every day.

Next event:

Saturday November 10, 6pm:

Marie-Cécile Reber, Sampling, Pickups

Pigeons Behind The Scene

This exhibition is generously supported by:

