

BERNHEIM

KLODIN ERB

BERNHEIM, London
May 31 – July 19, 2024

Bernheim is delighted to announce *Klodin Erb*, our newest London exhibition, showcasing one of the most renowned current Swiss artists of her generation and winner of the prestigious 2022 Prix Meret Oppenheim.

After intense exploration of conceptual issues in installations, object art and performances, Erb returned to painting in 2004, rapidly attracting both national and international attention. In her pictorial worlds, she explores the boundaries of painting through her fantastical and expressive vision, while also questioning the definitions of gender and identity. Formal influences come from popular and online culture, as well as art history, combined with her love of experimentation and constant probing of the limits of painting. Social structures and challenges are also themes at the forefront of her work. A precise observer of her surroundings and of the world at large, Klodin constantly interrogates and renews her work as an artist, driving it forward, through themes that dictate the form and techniques that are precisely tailored to maximise the expressive power of her artistry.

Klodin Erb combines this timelessness with the topicality of her work. Throughout the exhibition, the artist aims to populate the genre of painting with contemporary elements. Her figurative paintings feature rapid, gestural movements that rely on a lack of closure, on sketchiness and even fragmentation. A second look reveals that parts of the bodies in her figures have not been entirely fleshed out and are, in some cases, missing altogether, leaving room for a critical analysis and a reconfiguration of identity.

Transformation and transfiguration are also at the forefront of the artist's practice. In the *Kräfte und Säfte (Powers and Juices)* series, the idea of the environment as a live being is explored. Made during the pandemic with dispersion, oil, and spray paint, Klodin creates a world that has a distinct, stuttering rhythm and its own kind of pathos, constantly teetering between humour and sincerity while revealing its fragile identity. The subtle and translucent colours give these vegetable creatures in motion a magical allure, woven in the interplay between what is seen and what is guessed and giving representation to these timeless creatures while evolving the mediaeval and renaissance image of the mandragoras.

The genre of landscape painting also finds expression in her work through a series of *abstract landscapes*, which the artist described as "events", acknowledging the influence of Donna Haraway's ecofeminist stances as a necessity for making space. Fascinating in their organicity, the works are painted directly onto the surface, without any preliminary sketches. Though the artist works with a precise thematic idea, the paintings themselves emerge intuitively.

In the *Mermaids* series, the idea of the mermaid as genderless creatures are explored through the lens of mythology, sampling borrowings from art history with motifs from the contemporary world, developed and revealed in 27 different ways, creating a storytelling narrative. Through wild and bright colours, the artist celebrates the principle of metamorphosis as a fascinating and ever evolving relationship between the interconnection of life and mind.

"For me painting is a continuous process of thinking and realisation. Everything comes from everything." We cannot be sure whether what confronts us is a rehearsal or real-life; this is, in fact, the very quality that makes Klodin Erb's work so contemporary, for it mirrors our reality while fragmenting traditional structures, values and orders and providing an unprecedented and in-depth overview on the artist's vivid universe.

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Klodin Erb (b. 1963, Winterthur) lives and works in Zurich and holds an artistic professorship at the Department of Design, Film and Art at Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts.

Her works are represented in the collections of various museums, including the Kunstmuseum Bern; Kunstmuseum Winterthur; Museum zu Allerheiligen Schaffhausen; Kunsthaus Pasquart, Biel/Bienne, as well as many private collections. A major survey exhibition will open at the Kunstmuseum Aarau in the Fall 2025, following her impressive solo show at the Istituto Svizzero in Rome "A Different Kind of Furs" in 2023.

Recently she had important solo exhibitions at the Kunsthaus Pasquart, Biel/Bienne; Gluri Suter Huus, Wettingen; Helvetia Art Foyer, Basel; and was included in group exhibitions, amongst others "Die Augen der Bilder – Porträts von Fragonard bis Dumas", Museum Langmatt, Baden; "Docking Station", Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau; "Un(certain) Ground. Aktuelle Malerei in der Schweiz", Kunsthaus Pasquart, Biel/Bienne; "After Bob Ross: Beauty is everywhere", Museum im Bellpark, Kriens.

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