

KATZ CONTEMPORARY

CLARINA BEZZOLA *Fressen und gefressen werden*

31 August - 6 Oktober 2012
Season opening / summer party: Thursday, 30 August 2012, 5 - 9 pm
featuring the performance
"When I Walk Alone in the Streets"
7 pm, starting at the opera house

KATZ CONTEMPORARY gallery is delighted to present a solo exhibition and two performances by **Clarina Bezzola** (*1970). The show features drawings, sculptures and photographs by the New York based artist. A sculpture from the performance "When I Walk Alone in the Streets" greets the visitor by the entrance, immediately drawing him into Clarina Bezzola's world.

Bezzola deals with very personal topics, such as the human fear of one's own vulnerability and the inability to cope with it. In addition, she is concerned with every person's inner struggle of having to adapt to society while simultaneously trying to find oneself and staying true to oneself. Bezzola skilfully shows this in her work through different media: The artist herself as well as the audience are anchored in the present during the performance, thus finding themselves exposed in that very moment and confronted with each other. The viewer is forced to question his or her inner sensibility and emotional state. Bezzola takes up the subject of physicalness and plays it out consequently.

On the exhibition's opening night, Clarina Bezzola will show her performance "When I Walk Alone in the Streets". Dressed in a red gown whose neckline presents an enormous décolleté embellished with teeth, the artist promenades through the streets as a singing Musetta. A gigantic hand - a cast from the artist's own hand - has grown from her back. It is trying to claw itself into the ground in order to slow down time and with it the aging process - the red nails, however, cannot find anything to hold on to and weigh down Musetta during her walk through the city. Gigolos in white suits buzz around her; if one of them gets too close, he will be seduced and, as the tooth-adorned cleavage suggests, his head may mercilessly be swallowed. All the while the trained vocalist sings the Musetta's aria from Puccini's opera "La Bohème": *When I walk all alone in the street, people stop and stare at me and look for my whole beauty from head to feet and then I taste the slight yearning which transpires from their eyes and which is able to perceive from manifest charms to most hidden beauties. So the scent of desire is all around me, it makes me happy! And you, while knowing, reminding and longing, you shrink from me? I know it very well: you don't want to express your anguish, but you feel as if you're dying.*

In the second performance "The Lady with a thousand Faces", which will be shown in the gallery on September 13, 2012, audience and artist will be in a closed room. Bezzola will be wearing an opulent brown Empire style silk gown and a huge elaborately assembled wig on her head. Her face is hidden by a mask that the artist forged herself, a brass frame with a mirror in it. Faceless, and thus incognizable, she moves around in the space, goes up to individual viewers who will only see their own face looking back at them from the mirror, while singing an aria from Francesco Cilea's opera "Adriana Lecouvreur". The body's vibration from the opera singing combined with the self-reflection in the mirror reminds the viewers of their own physical presence, thus throwing them back onto themselves. The aria's lyrics further emphasize this thought: *Now I can hardly breathe, I am a humble servant of the creator, he offers me the gift of expression, which I communicate to others, I am the essence of poetry, a reflection of human struggle, a fragile instrument in service of mankind. Gentle joyful or cruel, I am always a faithful image, my voice is but a gentle breath which with the birth of a new day will die.*

Aside from the portable sculptures and props from the performances, the exhibition features Bezzola's drawings and further objects which shed a light on existential questions. Each in its own way, her works epitomize the topic *Fressen und Gefressen Werden*. Both actions imply at once the feeling of fear and the chance of a new beginning.

All of Bezzola's works share basic themes: The human being's return to his or her own body and the awareness that every organism is tied to the entire universe as well as turning away from the intellect and urge to comprehend and categorize everything rationally. The artist further illustrates this concern with the radical executions of her pieces. It is difficult to withdraw oneself from the immediate presence and the lack of emotional detachment. They challenge the viewer and force him to self-reflect.

Clarina Bezzola (*1970, in Zurich, lives and works in New York, USA) studied at Parsons School of Design, New York, until 1995. Her works have been exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions, both domestically and abroad, for instance at Kunsthalle Wien, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt or the National Museum of Art in Trinidad. Her performances have been shown internationally as well, most recently in Vienna, Istanbul and New York.

Sarah Wiesendanger &
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For image requests and further information, please contact the gallery:
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UPCOMING

Science & Fiction - A laboratory of drawing, curated by Sebastian Utzni
24 October - 22 December 2012
Opening: 23 October, 2012, 6 - 8 pm