

English Version

Céline Manz. 9 espaces distincts

1st Floor

How is the contemporary reception of the work of famous female artists of the twentieth century, such as Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Sonia Delaunay, and Meret Oppenheim, impacted by knowledge of their biographies, gender, and the handling of their estates and copyrights? Céline Manz (*1981, lives and works in Basel and London) seeks answers to these questions through various forms of artistic appropriation and re-interpretation. In *9 espaces distincts* (roughly: 9 clearly separated spaces), her largest solo exhibition up to date, Manz develops her topic at length for the first time. The title of the exhibition is an allusion to a painting by Sophie Taeuber-Arp.

Manz focuses on women who are counted among the most famous artists of the twentieth century and whose work, for this reason, has been received anew in different periodic contexts. The artist is interested in the openness to reception of their works, particularly following the death of their authors, and finds her own form of interpretation and reactivation. The relative fame of these female artists also allows Manz to tackle the issue of visibility of women in the art world in general. Taeuber-Arp, Oppenheim, and Delaunay frequently were the only women in a given exhibition. All three often were received with recourse to their biographies, that is, their marriages and collaborations with men, such as Hans Arp and Robert Delaunay. Their biographies have also impacted the handling and valuation of their artistic estates, whose gatekeepers and promoters shape their reception. This context is highly relevant to Manz's work as the legal situation for the use of their work differs drastically in the case of these three artists. In contrast to Sophie Taeuber-Arp, who has been dead for more than 70 years and whose copyright has lapsed, the works of Delaunay and Oppenheim, deceased in 1979 and 1985, respectively, will remain subject to copyright claims for a few more decades.

Four rooms of the exhibition contain works from the series *fold*; that refers to works by Sophie Taeuber-Arp (1889–1943), e.g. her architectural drawings for the Aubette tea room, bar, cinema and club in Strasbourg from the 1920s (her main interior design work). Manz interprets them in used neon lights and spray painted tea towels – low key materials in contrast to today's high end interior design references to modernism. Another work of the *fold*; series reinterprets paintings, printed here on silk and available as a scarf edition. Taeuber-Arp gained the couple's income teaching textile design. The traditional and gendered hierarchy between fine art and applied art played a big role in the history of the reception of Taeuber-Arp's multi-disciplinary work. The *fold*; series also contains collaborations with drummer Jakob Warmenbol who interpreted Taeuber-Arp's visual rhythms and with actress Laura Lienhard who interprets fragments of Taeuber-Arp's letters to her husband, containing their many nicknames for each other.

Sonia Delaunay (1885–1979) is the other major reference in Manz' exhibition. *Rythme sans fin* – Endless Rhythm was the name of a form invented by Sonia then used many times by her as well as her husband Robert Delaunay. In *Rythme sans fin, N° 1 – 1832* Céline Manz re-drew the form 1832 times, as many times as Sonia (who numbered hers) during her whole life. Manz used one version of the image, a gouache made by Sonia after Robert's death as a tribute, containing both signatures. Manz adds a third signature, her own. Sonia's homage was reproduced in a Situationist magazine in the sixties, with only Robert's signature readable – an interesting case of the complex authorship and interpretation questions that are key to Manz' work.

A third artist cited by Manz is Meret Oppenheim (1913–85) whose seminal acceptance speech for the 1974 Art Prize of the city of Basel Manz reproduced as a free edition (*Die Rede*) with the permission of Oppenheim's niece who owns the copyright. Manz found a handwritten post scriptum to the speech in the archive, where Oppenheim offers a solution to the tension between the "intellectual-female" and the "intellectual-male".

The last room contains *Pulse Persephone Ambient Eternity Mix*, a loop based on music of Daphne Oram, founder of the BBC Radiophonic Workshop celebrated as a female electronic pioneer, and Hildegard von Bingen, biographies and work of the 12th century abbess, scholar and composer who has been reinterpreted as a feminist pioneer since the 1970s. Like the other artists Manz refers to, their work is open to these interpretations, but defies simplifications. Manz takes their work from the high end context of the monastery (Hildegard) and radio studio (Oram) into the easily accessible popular realm of home made dance music, tongue in cheek, using cheap electronic instruments.

Event:

Tour with Céline Manz, Lecture by Laura Lienhard

Saturday, 14 March 2020, 2.00 pm

Céline Manz talks about her work in the exhibition. The actor Laura Lienhard reads excerpts from “fold; DaDa Letters”, pieces for vocal performance inspired by love letters between Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Hans Arp.

More information: www.kunsthautlangenthal.ch