

«Light is what we see.»

Brigitte Kowanz

PRESS RELEASE

**Brigitte Kowanz «Matter of Reflection»**

**Opening:** Friday, January 25, 2019 | 6 – 8 pm

**Exhibition:** until March 16, 2019

Häusler Contemporary is pleased to announce Brigitte Kowanz' third solo exhibition in Zurich, introducing two new types of work by the artist. Along with selected recent and earlier works the presentation impressively demonstrates how the Austrian artist continually uses light as a multifaceted tool of awareness in order to reflect on global political phenomena.

Ever since her major appearance at the Austrian Pavilion of the Venice Biennial 2017, Brigitte Kowanz (\*1957, Vienna, lives in Vienna) is internationally widely known. Her oeuvre, begun around 1980, combines light and language into memorable pictorial formula, visualizing the potential to submit information of these two basic components as well as the formal aesthetic value of language and the autonomy of the phenomenon of light.

The ambiguous title of Kowanz' third solo exhibition with us alludes to this interplay: «Matter of Reflection» unites selected new and some older works by the artist. They exemplify how Kowanz opens up spaces of reflection with her immersive light works and how she increasingly charges them with social, global political and art theoretical messages.

The sculpture «**Tipping Point**» from 2018 can be cited as an example of these new contend-related tendencies in Kowanz' oeuvre. The work's title is set as neon letters into a mirror cube where it is multiple repeated, superimposed and condensed. This results in a visual pull, creating an almost physical experience of the meaning of «tipping point»: the expression refers to a tilting moment in a previously uniform movement, which is abruptly aborted or greatly accelerated by certain factors. Today, the term is often related to our planet's alarming climatic changes, but it seems to be just as fitting for the rapid increase in speed to which our living environment was subject in the course of digitalization. In the works related to the Venice Biennial, Kowanz already addressed this issue, and it now echoes in our current show. For example, the neon writing «**beyond imagination**» (2017) refers to the unimaginable flood of information in the age of the Worldwide Web. Global political associations are also triggered by the likewise new neon sign «**face the fact**» (2018) or by the circular led letters of «**united in diversity**» (2018).

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Other works revolve around the question of what art is and can be today, for example the two mirror vitrines «**Allegory**» (2017) and «**authentic**» (2017), but also the freely led neon writing of «**Immersion I**» (2017). These terms are often and quickly quoted in connection with art, but upon closer consideration – which Kowanz claims by materializing them – they reveal a great deal about our expectations of art and about its sensitizing potential. With «**lightness**» of 2017 Kowanz furthermore addresses the basic theme of her work: the conscious perception of light – and with it the reflection on perception itself.

We are particularly pleased that Kowanz introduces two completely new types of work in our exhibition: the «**Reflects**» consisting of aluminum, reflecting foil and a transparent varnish applied by the artist emphasize light's magical and painterly quality. Furthermore Kowanz first presents a series of drawings that symbolize her creative process in between real, virtual and imagined space.

Our presentation thus provides an overview of Kowanz' manifold artistic language, opening up vast spaces of thought on both the formal and the content level.

*Deborah Keller, Häusler Contemporary*

### **Biographical Information**

Brigitte Kowanz has been a professor at Universität für angewandte Kunst in Wien since 1997. In 2009 she was awarded the Visual Art Award of The Arts and Culture Division of the Federal Chancellery of Austria and in 2018 The German Award on Light Art.

As early as 1984 and again in 1995 she was represented at the Venice Biennial, in 1987 at the Biennial of São Paulo and in 1990 at the one of Sidney. Another highlight was her installation at the Austrian Pavillion of the Venice Biennial in 2017. World-renowned institutions own works by the artist and have given her major exhibitions in recent years, among others the Zentrum für internationale Lichtkunst in Unna (2005), the Museum Moderner Kunst (MUMOK) in Vienna (2010) or the Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig (2019). In 2020 the Museum Haus Konstruktiv in Zurich will present a solo show.

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