

«While perfection might bring one closer to God, imperfection brings emphasis to human qualities.»

Judy Ledgerwood

PRESS RELEASE

Judy Ledgerwood «Beyond Beauty»

Opening: Thursday, March 21, 2019
The artist will be present

Exhibition: until May 25, 2019

Häusler Contemporary Zürich is pleased to first present in Switzerland ceramics made by American painter Judy Ledgerwood at Porzellan Manufaktur Nymphenburg in 2018. Along with new paintings by the artist who unites different facets of art and cultural history in her work, a highly sensual exhibition comes into being, offering in-depth insight into Ledgerwood's conceptual artistic approach.

The powerful color and opulent ornamentation of the works of Judy Ledgerwood (born 1959, Brazil, US, lives in Chicago and Sawyer, US) are deeply rooted in the tradition of painting. Ever since the beginning of her career, the artist consciously takes her own position within recent art history and challenges its prevailing, supposedly fixed premises and role assignments. She adopts influences from color-field and action painting and combines them with simple geometric patterns reminiscent of popular culture and textile design, often assigned to femininity.

Several residencies at Porzellan Manufaktur Nymphenburg since 2016 gave Ledgerwood the unique opportunity to combine her innovative artistic approach with a traditional craft, the results of which we proudly present for the first time in Switzerland. The vessels from 2018 and selected paintings on canvas and on paper provide a comprehensive overview of the artist's oeuvre.

With her majolica Ledgerwood emphasizes the different layers of meaning of the vase: it is an icon of the domestic everyday life, a sculpture and a relief carrier as well as the documentation of a performative process. In the dimensions as realized by the artist, it also becomes a metaphor for the human body. Each of the vessels is furnished with a variation of the quatrefoil motif or the diamond pattern. The glaze is sometimes applied in a translucent way, sometimes more opaque, often with a high-contrast coloring of the interior and exterior, and when choosing the colors the artist always takes into account their traditional meaning. Often, she adds luxurious metallic silver or gold tones, leaving the edges of the vessels raw in turn, creating a tense dialogue between the **simple**

Häusler Contemporary Zürich
Stampfenbachstrasse 59
CH-8006 Zürich

Telefon 0041 43 810 04 26
zuerich@haeusler-contemporary.com
www.haeusler-contemporary.com

material and the decorative appearance of the haptically attractive objects.

The motifs of quatrefoil and diamond are repeated in the paintings in our exhibition. It is not without reason that Ledgerwood has used these shapes in her work: they played a significant role in Stone Age cultures that worshipped goddesses. In her paintings, the artist joins the single motifs into irregularly shaped grids and permits color to drip outside the grid structure, adding an element of real time to the many other experiences available when viewing the paintings, such as after-image and optical fatigue. Furthermore, her carpet-fringe-like traces of liquid paint become a fresh reinterpretation of the so-called «dripping» with which the American Abstract Expressionists celebrated success in the 1950s.

Thus, our exhibition illustrates how Judy Ledgerwood's incredibly sensuous works are based on a conceptual approach that, «beyond beauty», tells the story of painting, the symbolism of colors and shapes, and the invigorating effect of imperfection.

Deborah Keller

Accompanying the exhibition, Häusler Contemporary has published a brochure designed by Peter Zimmermann which documents the Nymphenburg ceramics.

Biographical Information

Judy Ledgerwood is a professor in Art & Theory at the Northwestern University of Chicago. Her work was exhibited in numerous solo shows in the US and was introduced to the European public by Häusler Contemporary. Her paintings are part of important collections such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and Los Angeles.

Don't hesitate to contact Simone Töllner for further information:

+41 43 810 04 26, st@haeusler-contemporary.com

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