



**AVERY SINGER  
PICTURES  
PUNISHWORDS  
KUNSTHALLE  
ZÜRICH**

22. NOVEMBER 2014 – 25. JANUAR 2015

LIMMATSTRASSE 270, CH-8005 ZÜRICH

MO GESCHLOSSEN

DI / MI / FR 11–18 UHR, DO 11–20 UHR

SA / SO 10–17 UHR

# Einladung zur Eröffnung der Ausstellung

## AVERY SINGER

### Freitag, 21. November 2014, 18–21 Uhr

**Begrüssung: Batrix Ruf, 18.45 Uhr, Foyer**



I remember the number, 270, and quickly turn around from the glass door labeled 266 and continue down the street. I’m sure everyone in my immediate proximity is a dealer or a gallery worker of some kind. It feels like I’ve been transported to another world. It’s safe and sanitized here, the weather is cold, though mild, and thoroughly predictable. I’m still dressed for a New York summer, shivering slightly out of discomfort and fear, I briskly grip my luggage and go upstairs to face whatever awaits me.

“...Kunsthallé,” finishes a melodic voice. The speaker, I’ve noticed, has a tendency of using this word without pronouns, like the way you might mention a loved one (I’ve never pointed this out to her, it’s an idiosyncrasy of hers I’d decided to catalogue in my mental library of mannerisms). On my way out, I see a small spider on the wall outside “Kunsthalle’s” front door. It’s the only thing that seems out of place in the building. Every view, whether it’s from a hallway or out a window is a carefully constructed modernist geometric scheme that produces a strange mixture of feelings in me – a sense of safety and assured efficiency, a complex emotional cocktail meant to veil my suspicions over yearnings for conformity. I’m sitting on a bench, waiting for someone on the wrong floor, so it gives me a while to contemplate the handsome visuality of this superstructure. Every angle is carefully planned – here, shall we make it acute, or obtuse? Should this go right, or left? Should we privilege X, Y, or Z? In this way, nothing stands out singularly. A temple is constructed, through a hyper-awareness of every angle and surface texture (from the walls to the floors) that results from the shaping of a building, a room, a corner. The architectural color palette is restricted, but not predictable. These are the reasons why the tiny spider is so striking to me – it places me at once in the situation of having both a microscopic and macroscopic position of power.

*I heard John Waters once say that he plans his hangovers two months in advance. I’m glad to know that there is a kindred spirit in this vast world of eccentrics.*

The trains in New York move so quickly through their dilapidated tunnels that they displace all the air in front of them, so if you’re not prepared you’ll get hit by a pungent waft of urine as the train approaches the station. I do this instinctively as the slight tinkering of lights and what sounds like thousands of hammers begins filtering down the subway shaft. I board the train to go back to my studio after a night of sleeping on some friend’s sofa in Brooklyn.

A wan-looking ghost of a man on the train is asking for money for colo-rectal cancer treatment. He pulls up his sweatshirt to show us the scar from his recent operation, after which, according to his account of the events, the city threw him out of the hospital equipped only with an oversized sweat suit and a bag of diapers. Everyone wretches a little and looks away without trying to draw attention to themselves. He gets a few bucks from the car and moves on to the next.

I get out at my station, Cypress Ave., which is where all of the drug-addled folk disembark from the leviathan glittering silverfish of the 6 train. I’ve come to realize this particular corner of New York is the city government’s unofficial leper colony. Every type of person the decision-making class has collectively agreed upon not integrating into the

mainstream of society gets placed here in abandoned factories – drug users, people trying to come off drugs, pedophiles finding their footing after jail stints, and homeless people with HIV/AIDS.

*I wonder if other artists feel that their first studio is probably the best and the worst they’ll ever have?*

I walk through the turnstiles and see the burnt outline of where a token booth had once stood. All that remains of it is what looks like a torched-out archaic floor plan of a hut from the 2nd temple period. I quickly go up the stairs, passing aluminum tins of half-eaten yellow rice and beans, and used condoms. Exiting the stairwell, I emerge to the South Bronx. It’s February, so snow is on the ground and I pull up the hood on my NorthFace to keep the wind from whipping my etiolated cheeks. I look around to observe the street activity. Moving quickly down 138th street, I veer sharply right and pass a basement entrance that’s become a stray cat colony. I take a deep breath to prepare for crossing the eight-lane highway I am about to jaywalk.

I step trepidatiously in front of a large, parked car. Peering to the left, I observe two lanes of traffic with an endless stream of cars passing me by. Finally, the spate of vehicles stops at a red light at the intersection, and I run across the two roadways, making sure no one veers off 138th street onto the highway, mowing me down in the process. I continue running down a short dirt hill until I get to the next part of the highway. Another two lanes going the same direction. I run through these as the tide of traffic hasn’t started back up yet, stepping over plastic shards, broken bottles, mangled cans, and other detritus. When I get to the 3rd part of the highway, I shift my gaze to my right, and wait to see when a good opportunity will be to cut across this traffic artery. Cars are streaming by, and their passengers are looking at me with a mixture of speculation and horror. I’m sure they assume I’m a prostitute heading to work the streets of Hunts Point or Port Morris, or maybe the ghost of a former factory worker that died in an unfortunate manufacturing accident producing staples or textiles – or something of the like – in one of the old factories in the district.

After some time it slows up and I run the final stretch of highway. Emerging unblemished from the surreal experience of illegally crossing a 4-part, multiple-lane highway, I cautiously stride down the empty street of Bruckner Blvd., looking around to make sure no one has followed me.

I walk alongside a barbed-wire fence that encircles an empty lot with smashed paint cans strewn about, and make a left at the corner. The garbage I’ve put out on the street for collection has been slashed several times and the bag has spilled its contents, which have slowly started drifting down the sidewalk into no man’s land. I approach my door, a sort of 80s looking buffed piece of steel with the numbers “721” etched in a style that’s reminiscent of an alternative café in a small north eastern college town. I open the door quickly and shut it, turning the lock expeditiously, having safely arrived home.



In den technisch und ikonographisch frappierenden Gemälden von Avery Singer (geboren 1987, lebt und arbeitet in New York) werden unsere Sehgewohnheiten irritiert, denn sie lassen auf den ersten Blick keine eindeutige Zuordnung zur Malerei oder zu Druckverfahren zu. Kunstgeschichte kommt hier nicht als Nacheinander von Stilmitteln und Sujets zum Ausdruck, sondern wird als konstitutives Nebeneinander von Formsprachen und Problematiken reflektiert. So aktuell wie ihre Auseinandersetzung mit der Malerei seit 2010 ist, so sind es auch die bildgebenden Verfahren, die die Künstlerin erprobt. Mittels des Grafikprogramms SketchUp, das für 3D-Modelle in der Architektur eingesetzt wird, konstruiert sie komplexe räumliche Kompositionen, die sie mit abstrahierten Figuren und Objekten füllt und in Grautönen auf die Leinwand überträgt. Die illusionistische Räumlichkeit der Bildkompositionen kontrastiert Singer mit einer technisch ins Extreme gesteigerten Flachheit ihrer Maleroberfläche, die kunstgeschichtliche wie wahrnehmungsspezifische Fragen thematisiert und weitertreibt.

Die physische Beschaffenheit ihrer Malerei kommt als Bedingung für und Einwand gegen die räumliche Illusion der Bildgegenstände zum Einsatz. In Verbindung mit den dezidiert kunstbetrieblichen Motiven der Werke Singers – ihre Arbeiten widmen sich oftmals in parodistisch-autobiografischer Weise künstlerisch alltäglichen Arbeitssituationen – stellt sich die Frage, welche Bedeutungsverschiebungen die Bedingungen von Digitalität und Virtualität auf künstlerischem Gebiet und insbesondere auch für das Medium der Malerei zeitigen.



In dieser ersten institutionellen Präsentation wird Avery Singer mit einem eigens für die Ausstellung in der Kunsthalle Zürich geschaffenen Werkzyklus Einblick in ihr Schaffen geben. Im Anschluss wird die Ausstellung in der Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin zu sehen sein.



*By not revealing at first glance whether they are paintings or prints, the technically and iconographically astonishing works of Avery Singer (born in 1987 in New York, where she lives and works) are confounding to our viewing habits. Art history is expressed here not as a sequence of styles and subjects but is rather considered a constitutive juxtaposition of formal languages and problems. Experimenting with painting since 2010, the visual methods that the artist explores are equally contemporary. Employing the graphic program SketchUp, which is used for 3D modeling in architecture, Singer constructs complex spatial compositions. She then fills them with abstract figures and objects and transfers these to canvas in shades of gray. Pushed to an extreme, this technique allows Singer to contrast the resulting illusionary spatiality of these pictorial compositions with the flatness of her painting surfaces, in order to raise and pursue art historical and perceptual questions.*

Avery Singer, 2014

*The physical makeup of her painting is employed both as a condition for and as an objection to the spatial illusion of visual objects. In combination with the motifs in Singer’s works – some explicitly connected to the art world and dedicated in a parodistic, autobiographical way to everyday working situations in the arts – this raises the question which shifts in meaning may result from the conditions of digitality and virtuality in the visual arts and more specifically in the medium of painting.*

Avery Singer, 2014

*In her first solo-exhibition in an art institution, Avery Singer will offer new insight into this work by presenting a cycle of works created especially for Kunsthalle Zürich. Following the presentation in Zurich, the exhibition will travel to the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin.*

<p><b>MAKING OF – MALEREI / PAINTING</b></p> <p>Unter dem Motto «Making of» finden eine Reihe von Theorie- und Vermittlungsprogrammen statt, die bis anhin das Spannungsfeld von digitalen Kreisläufen und körperlicher Erfahrung in der Video- und Objektinstallation diskutierten. Der mit der Ausstellung von Jana Euler begonnene Schwerpunkt «Making of – Malerei» geht diesen Fragen nun auf dem Gebiet der Malerei nach: Welche Möglichkeiten des künstlerischen Schaffens und ästhetischen Erlebens bietet der klassische Pinselstrich vor dem Hintergrund verstärkt virtueller Materialitäten?</p> <p><i>Kunsthalle Zürich presents a series of public programmes, titled «Making of», that have so far dealt with the relationships between digital circuits and corporeal experience engaged by video art and object-installation. The new cycle «Making of – Painting», that started with the exhibition of Jana Euler, seeks to further these questions in the field of painting: What potentials for artistic production and aesthetical reflection does the classical brush stroke offer in a time marked by increasingly virtual materialities?</i></p>
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<p><b>WÖRTER ÜBER BILDER – VOM SCHERZEN UND STRAFEN / WORDS ON PICTURES – PUNS AND PUNISHMENT</b></p> <p>SYMPOSIUM, SONNTAG, 23. NOVEMBER, AB 11.00 UHR, TEILNEHMER/INNEN WERDEN BEKANNT GEGEBEN / <i>SUNDAY, 23 NOVEMBER, STARTING 11 AM, PARTICIPANTS TO BE ANNOUNCED</i></p> <p>„Ein Witz ist niemals fair zu seinem Gegenstand. Er hat keine Nettigkeit übrig, er straft!“, sagt Avery Singer über den Einsatz von Humor in ihren Gemälden. Das gemeinsam mit der Künstlerin entwickelte Symposium versammelt eine Gruppe von Kritiker/innen und Künstler/innen, die ihr Interesse an selbst-reflexiver Malerei und ihren Irritationen teilen: Bilder die begeistern, indem sie neue Techniken und Mechanismen der Bildproduktion in die Malerei einführen anstatt ihren Produktionsprozess hinter einer konzeptuellen These zu verbergen. Anknüpfende Fragen nach Mediumspezifität und/oder post-medialen Bedingungen werden von den Beitragenden ebenso erörtert, wie unterschiedliche „Attitüden“ von Malerei und ihrer möglichen (Selbst-)Kritik mit den Mitteln des Scherzes.</p> <p><i>“A joke is never fair to its subject. It bears it no niceties, it punishes it!” says Avery Singer, responding to the use of humor in her paintings. Hence, the symposium, developed together with the artist, invites a group of critics and fellow artists that share Singer’s interest in self-reflexive painting and its irritations: paintings that may excite the viewer precisely because their production process is not veiled by conceptual statements, but instead by the introduction of new techniques and image-production mechanisms unfamiliar to the practice of painting. Departing from such questions of medium specificity, contributors will elaborate on several “attitudes” of painting as a multi-layered practice of (self-)punishment by way of the pun.</i></p>
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<p><b>AUSSTELLUNGSFÜHRUNGEN / GUIDED TOURS</b></p> <p>SONNTAGS, 14 Uhr: 21.12., 04.01.</p> <p>ABENDS, Donnerstag, 18.30 Uhr: 17.11., 15.01.</p> <p>MITTAGS, Mittwoch, 12.30 Uhr: 10.12., 07.01., 21.01.</p> <p>Gerne arrangieren wir spezielle Anlässe und Gruppenbuchungen, auch in englischer Sprache.</p> <p>We welcome special requests for group visits and guided tours, also in English.</p> <p><b>SPEZIAL! SONNTAG, 25.01., AB 14 UHR:</b></p> <p>DIE GESCHICHTE DER MALEREI – VON LASCAUX BIS LAS VEGAS</p>
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<p><b>PUBLIKATION / PUBLICATION</b></p> <p>Zur Ausstellung erscheint in Kollaboration mit der Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo die erste Monographie der Künstlerin bei JRP/Ringier. Mit Beiträgen von Matthew Brannon, Sven Loven, Aram Moshayedi und Carmen Wintant sowie Illustrationen von Ebecho Muslimova und zahlreichen weiteren Abbildungen.</p> <p><i>The first monograph on the artist including texts by Matthew Brannon, Sven Loven, Aram Moshayedi and Carmen Wintant, as well as illustrations by Ebecho Muslimova and numerous images will be published by JRP/Ringier, in cooperation with the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin.</i></p>
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<p><b>ÖFFNUNGSZEITEN:</b> DI/MI/FR 11–18 UHR, DO 11–20 UHR, SA/SO 10–17 UHR, MO GESCHLOSSEN / CLOSED, FEIERTAGE / HOLIDAYS 26.12., 01. &amp; 02.01.2015: 10–17 UHR, 25.12. GESCHLOSSEN / CLOSED</p>
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<p><b>Unser Dank geht an:</b></p>
<p><b>Stadt Zürich Kultur</b></p> <p><b>Kanton Zürich, Fachstelle Kultur</b></p> <p><b>Zürcher Kantonalbank – Partnerin der Kunsthalle Zürich</b></p> <p><b>LUMA Stiftung</b></p>