

Point of View

About the artistic work of Zhanina Marinova

In her artistic practice, Zhanina Marinova deals intensively with the relationship between presence and absence as well as with interstices and explores both the physical and metaphorical meaning of these conditions in her colorful works. Originally from Bulgaria, the artist endeavors in her art to make visible and tangible the experiences, emotions and thoughts that drive us humans in our existence, so her works always invite interaction. She also combines two different worlds in her work: she completed a classical education in Varna, which included academic drawing, printmaking, painting and sculpture. On the other hand, she completed the printmaking class at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, which gave her freedom and self-determination in dealing with the various techniques and materials. Working at the interface between screen printing, drawing, installation and book art, her work focuses on playful exploration, dialogue with various materials and ambivalent formulations.

The medium Marinova mainly works with is screen printing based on analogue drawings on a scale of 1:1, supplemented by additional layers of material, sprayed paint, or brushed ink. This requires both technical skill and inspiration and plays a major role in her artistic endeavors. The starting point of the analogue process is always a drawing of abstract patterns and moving structures, which are then transferred to transparent foil to be placed on the prepared screen and exposed in the next step. After carefully washing out the screen, the motif is revealed and then finds its way onto various materials, be it paper, fabric, canvas, mesh, transparent foil or plexiglas. Marinova's interest focuses on surfaces that not only thematize physical permeability, but also question the complex boundaries between visibility and invisibility on the one hand and represent interstices on the other. The artist explores the limits of what is possible by distorting, expanding, and staggering the layers. In doing so, she experiments with size, form and color and expresses her own feelings and ideas. She often prints three to four different layers to create the desired intensity, colorfulness and depth. Although the creation process is characterized by constant repetition, each piece is unique as a monotype and places the artist's own fantasy and imagination at the center. These depict an impressive variety of overlays and combinations that allow different motifs to merge. Flowing movements, energetic dynamics, and organic forms, inspired by the environment, invite an individual narrative that captures the subtle nuances of life. During the creative process, the final level, the interweaving with the space, remains open. In addition to initial mental visualizations, the spatial realization and presentation of a work is tied to its location and therefore also to chance and intuitive processes. This dynamic gives the process a certain freedom and a natural flow.

The processual nature is reflected not only in the technique Marinova uses, but also in the selection of works included in a series, with each series consisting of several parts. The installation *Transparent bodies, mirroring shadows* shown at Porgy & Bess represents the fourth chapter of the extensive *INTERSTICE* project, in which intermediate spaces, whether temporal or spatial, are more precisely defined and characterized. Interstitial spaces can be

understood as empty spaces, interfaces or transitions that connect different concepts, ideas and realities and thus enable new interpretations. Marinova uses these aspects to expose ambiguity and complexity in identity, culture, history, and politics, to create tension, to draw the viewer's attention to gaps in life and thus to illustrate the complexity of human existence. Viewers are thus challenged to look beyond the obvious and make new connections, to deal with the ambivalences of life and explore different perspectives. Memories from her childhood act as a source of inspiration for this, lending her works a palpable lightness. A playful paradox can be found in each of her artistic creations, inviting viewers to look at life with a twinkle in their eye. The titles of her works are designed like little riddles, often with humorous contradictions. These deliberate inconsistencies create a unique dynamic and encourage the viewer not only to look at the works superficially, but also to explore their deeper layers.

The brightly colored, translucent, and fragile works in the *Transparent bodies, mirroring shadows* series float at different heights and react to the movements made towards them by slowly swaying back and forth. Surprise and subtle depths play a decisive role both in the design and in the hanging. Marinova deliberately works with the existing mirrors to create an unexpected dimension in the viewing experience and to positively challenge the audience. If you look at the screen prints in the mirror, you are only then presented with the front, but at the same time a reflection of the surroundings and the viewer is captured. This level not only creates an aesthetic fascination, but also encourages viewers to question their own perception and explore the relationship between the self, the art, and the space.

This integration of mirrors emphasizes a thought process that goes beyond the obvious. It encourages us not to look at everything superficially, but to explore the hidden layers and meanings that lie beneath the apparent surface. Through this artistic choice, the artist creates an interactive experience that invites the viewer to question their own role in the artwork and discover new perspectives.

The series *Same but different* series is presented in the form of Plexiglas blocks with two sides, each containing different works and narrative elements. This composition makes it possible to view a story from different angles and interpretations. However, due to the transparent nature of the Plexiglas, not all levels are always visible at the same time. In this way, the artist offers a dynamic experience and invites the viewer to explore different perspectives and possibilities. This fascinating interaction between art and viewer allows for an exploration of such complexity and depth in the work.

The play with the viewer and the attempt to repeatedly evoke a change of perspective testify to an openness towards complexity and ambivalence and a willingness to deepen the superficial moments and perspectives with the help of paradoxes. This willingness is reflected in the work in numerous dimensions, from the creative process and the choice of material to the hanging and final presentation and allows the viewer to participate interactively in this dynamic.