

Press Release

Rivane Neuenschwander

knife does not cut fire

12 November 2021 – 24 April 2022

Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein is pleased to present the first comprehensive solo exhibition in the German-speaking world of the internationally renowned Brazilian artist Rivane Neuenschwander (*1967 in Belo Horizonte). *knife does not cut fire*, including approximately fifty works, showcases Neuenschwander's diverse oeuvre with emphasis on her most recent production. On display will be paintings, objects, films, textile works and expansive installations in which visitors can participate. The artist has created a number of new artworks, which continue themes explored in earlier series, especially for the exhibition at Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein.

Neuenschwander is interested in the societal questions of our time and often links them with traditions from Brazilian culture. Fears and hopes are recurrent themes in her work. Poetically and sensuously, she experiments with language, time or intervenes in the transformational processes of life, giving viewers a palpable sense of how her works play between aesthetic lightness and menacing seriousness.

The title of the show is taken from a poem by the famous Portuguese lyric poet Herberto Helder (1930–2015) and testifies to Neuenschwander's trust in the power of poetry. At the same time, this quote possesses considerable social relevance: no knife can open people's hearts, let alone put out "political" fires. Instead, it is an instrument which, when turned against someone, causes fear.

Capes to protect against fears

In 2015 the artist began designing capes with children to protect them from their fears. The collaborative work *The Name of Fear* is an important focal point of the exhibition and was continued with schools in Liechtenstein and Switzerland especially for this show. In workshops the children named their fears – such as claustrophobia, fear of the dark or snakes – and made capes based on drawings to shield them from these fears. Starting out from these garments – some of which resemble carnival, animal or superhero costumes – the artist collaborated with the Brazilian designer Guto Carvalhoneto to create the protective capes that are on display and that children can try on. An octagonal platform in front of a large mirrored wall invites visitors to perform with the capes.

Wishes, play and experimentation

The show also features works expressing wishing, freedom, experimentation and play. For example, *I Wish Your Wish* (2003), harks back to a custom from the Brazilian Church of Nosso Senhor do Bonfim in Salvador. On the walls of the exhibition hang thousands of colourful ribbons with wishes printed on them. Visitors are invited to choose a wish-ribbon and tie it around their wrist and, conversely, to leave wishes ('I Wish') for others ('Your Wish'). The tradition has it that the wishes will be fulfilled if the ribbon falls off on its own. As colourful and playful as *I Wish Your Wish* may seem at first sight, the small-print wishes often also speak of existential worries or fears.

Processes of nature and global effects

In her oeuvre, Neuenschwander explores fears and hopes, demonstrating how they define people and society. Her works testify to a great interest in cultural, psychological and sociological questions, but also to processes of nature and their global effects. There is thus a profoundly philosophical understanding in her works in which she puts the human perspective into perspective; for example, the passage of time, the power of the nature or the activity of animals, that the artist stages as formative protagonists.

In the film *Quarta-feira de Cinzas/Epilogue* (Ash Wednesday/Epilogue) from 2006, we see ants carrying away colourful confetti of the type that is scattered around during carnivals in Brazil. This is accompanied by a soundtrack of gentle samba rhythms by the Brazilian duo O Grivo. Co-author of this work is the Brazilian filmmaker Cao Guimarães.

The installation *Chove Chuve* (Rain Rains) from 2002 was recreated for the present display. Water drips from hanging buckets and collects in buckets on the ground. The falling drops evoke memories of rainfall, for example in Brazil's tropical climate.

In the foyer, visitors are invited to fill the empty pages and balloons of a comic and to write new stories. Neuenschwander's *Joe Carioca and Friends (The Abduction of the Maiden)* (2004–2021) is based upon a comic involving the character José Carioca – a parrot with a Cuban cigar and an umbrella invented by Walt Disney in 1942 as a Brazilian friend for Donald Duck in order to strengthen Pan-American ties.

A Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein production, curated by Christiane Meyer-Stoll.

***A Day Like Any Other* in public spaces**

As part of the exhibition *Rivane Neuenschwander. knife does not cut fire* at Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, twelve flip clocks, ticking but set to 00:00, from *A Day Like Any Other* (2008) will be on show at twelve public sites – including the post office, regional library and TAK Theater Liechtenstein in Vaduz, but also in Buchs (Switzerland) and Feldkirch (Austria).

Exhibition publication

A publication is forthcoming in spring 2022 that will feature installation views from the exhibition, short texts on Neuenschwander's work, essays by Venezuelan curator Julieta González and Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos and an interview between the artist and Christiane Meyer-Stoll.

Short biography of Rivane Neuenschwander

Rivane Neuenschwander (*1967 in Belo Horizonte, Brazil) lives and works in São Paulo.

She studied at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (Fine Arts), Belo Horizonte, 1988–93 and at the Royal College of Art, London, 1996–98.

Selected solo exhibitions: *A Day Like Any Other*, New Museum, New York and Mildred Kemper Art Museum, Saint Louis (2010); *At a Certain Distance*, Malmö Konsthall, Malmö (2010); *POST – The Order and the Method*, Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen (2013); *Children's Commission 2015. Rivane Neuenschwander*, Whitechapel Gallery, London (2015); *Tropics*, Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel, São Paulo (2019).

Neuenschwander participated in the Biennale di Venezia (2003, 2005), the Bienal de São Paulo (1998, 2006, 2008) and the Istanbul Biennial (1997, 2011). Her works can be found in major museum collections worldwide, including Tate (London), Centre Pompidou (Paris), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York), Museum of Modern Art (New York), Walker Art Center (Minneapolis) and MAM Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo.

Opening

Thursday, 11 November 2021, from 18:00

Open House days

Saturday, 13 November 2021, 10:00–17:00, and Sunday, 14 November 2021, 10:00–17:00

Free admission to three new exhibitions

10:30–16:00: Short guided tours

14:00–16:00: Excursions and activity islands for families

Visitors aged 16 and over must comply with the 3G rule.

Online artist talk

Thursday, 24 February 2022, 18:00

Rivane Neuenschwander. knife does not cut fire

With Rivane Neuenschwander and Christiane Meyer-Stoll

In English, please register to take part in the discussion via Zoom.

Rivane Neuenschwander's solo exhibition *knife does not cut fire* was planned during the COVID-19 pandemic. Often engaging with the particular situation at an exhibition's venue, this time the artist did not travel here from São Paulo. The entire communication took place online, from viewing the premises to gathering initial ideas and detailed planning of the exhibition.

The online discussion will give an insight into the show and the conception and production of *knife does not cut fire*.

Accompanying programme

See www.kunstmuseum.li and programme brochure for November 2021–April 2022.

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