

ARTFORUM

BERTA FISCHER

James Fuentes

By Charity Coleman

Berta Fischer's show at the James Fuentes gallery felt like the happy wreckage of a good party. The Berlin-based artist's polychromatic acrylic-glass and neon-and-rope sculptures summoned a never-ending celebration for the sheer fun of it: an invitation to enjoy light and prismatic trickery in gestural forms that (un)furled and posed seemingly at whim. The effect was carefree but not careless—each thermoformed piece was expertly manipulated into a dynamic biomorph or watery, melty planes. Fluidity was achieved with rigor.

Petutula, 2019, was the host with the most, constructed of fraternal twin parts suspended side by side from the ceiling like jaunty marionettes mid-jig; each one was about seven feet tall and strategically positioned to greet visitors. The durable material had the deceptively whispery appearance of cellophane cut into rounded and exclamatory frills that glimmered with cool blues and frosty pinks. The same coloration was echoed in Gomolurin, 2019, a wall-dwelling companion piece that didn't quite dance, but imparted the metallic airiness of foil gift wrap or a deconstructed Mylar balloon at sea. The works all seemed very casual, like the flotsam and jetsam of a ninety-nine-cent store, and one almost wished something cataclysmic would happen to disrupt the scene. Or perhaps plastic itself was the cataclysm, an example of the beautiful problems we endeavor to create and struggle to solve—despite the prettiness of these works, they hinted darkly of oceanic trash vortices and a planet in peril.

In some instances, the wavy shapes of Fischer's megaplastics mimicked macroalgae, particularly the fuschia tangle of Ubris, 2019, a clump of brazen curls that appeared ready to burst into flame, so vivid was the coral-line glow. It was the smallest work in the room, barely a foot in diameter, mounted about nine feet up the wall and boldly underscored by its own lively roseate shadow. The luridly hued Hiroxi, 2019, positioned nearby at eye level, was beribboned by two individual but intertwining strips of hypergreen and fluorescent yellow—they writhed and looped across and through a rippling panel of gleaming hot purple, raspberry, and pearlescent silver. The material had been pushed to the brink, bruised with emphatic color. Fiber-optic glow toys and marine phosphorescence would



View of “Berta Fischer,” 2019. From left: *Gomolurin*, 2019; *Ubix*, 2017; *Petutula*, 2019; *Sokal*, 2018.

easily have been at home here. The electric illumination of *Ubix*, 2017, a large hanging sculpture, glanced off the work's surface in subtle ways. Its bright duet of neon tubes—one in turquoise, one in orange—formed wonky curvatures that were bound by a crisscrossing network of elastic ropes in shades of chartreuse, recalling an errant game of cat's cradle. It was a sticky wicket, a spastic orbit that might spin in a space-ocean if it could.

Sokal, 2018, with its citrusy palette (orange, lime, grapefruit, lemon), was a dreamscape of sunny undulations, and seemed as dissolvable as gummies and sugar glass. Its simplicity was deceptive—though it appeared to be one structure, it was actually comprised of five parts clustered together, based on a diagram by the artist and mounted on straight hooks. Its unity was achieved through careful suspension rather than interdependent tension. From a distance, it managed to look as frolicsome and guileless as the rest of Fischer's work.

When I was at the gallery, an attendant showed me a second, less inviting space that housed five additional works that were in the process of being photographed: *Akadi*, *Atumb*, *Dosalis*, *Goris*, and *Zkiolsa*, all 2019. A tripod and camera were set up in the crowded room, and the sculptures were not easily viewable. I felt as if I were eavesdropping on them. But they spoke in volumes of excited color and movement—a dialect that Fischer uses fluently.

Time Out

BERTA FISCHER **Time Out says**

The work of this Berlin artist has been described as a cross between John Chamberlain's twisted auto-body sculptures and Naum Gabo's plastic constructions from the 1920s and '30s. But while she does use Plexiglas to realize her abstract objects, her approach is far more lyrical and light on its feet than the efforts of those two artists. Suspended from the ceilings with monofilament, or hung on the wall as reliefs, her work seems to capture the evanescence of soap bubbles or scraps of cellophane being blown in the wind.



Photograph: Courtesy James Fuentes

artnet



Berta Fischer, *Setrolyn* (2015). Courtesy of Galerie Barbara Weiss.

MUST-SEE ART GUIDE: BERLIN

This week's guide includes Isa Genzken, Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, and more.

By Astyaj Ghassemi Bass

You could be forgiven for thinking that we have a soft spot for Berlin; after all, the city is artnet's hometown. So don't take it from us, take it from the artists, connoisseurs, and gallery-hoppers who will tell you that Germany's capital is also the fast-beating heart of European art and style, with continental cool and legendary nightlife to match. As cities around the world tout their up-and-coming cultural scenes by claiming to be "the next Berlin," the real message is clear: this is Berlin's moment.

In fact, it's Gallery Weekend Berlin, and we have the guide of must-see shows you don't want to miss. Although, you're bound to miss a few since there are too many to see in one trip, but we'll help you narrow it down. Start off with German native Isa Genzken's eleventh solo show at Galerie Buchholz, and view her "Ellipsoids" and "Hyperbolos" sculptures. Also be sure to see her work *El Salvador* from 1980, titled after the famous show of the same name. Or celebrate artist Arnold Odermatt's 90th birthday at Galerie Springer Berlin, showcasing selected photographic works from his career, in addition to presenting a new, never-before-seen series by the artist. From there, head over to Esther Schipper to view the New Museum's 2015 Triennial artist Daniel Steegmann Mangrané's site-specific film *Spiral Forest*, produced with a custom-made camera that films while rotating 360 degrees on any axis. For those of you seeking a good group show, Ape Culture opens today at Haus der Kulturen der Welt, with works that explore the relationship between humans and other primates, by artists Pierre Huyghe, Damián Ortega, and Rosemarie Trockel, just to name a few.

Once a divided city, Berlin has become a diverse metropolis with a wonderfully varied art scene to match. From quirky backstreet galleries to museums containing works by legends of European modern art, this is a city with something for everyone.

Exhibition: "Berta Fischer" and "Thomas Bayrle 'Gerani / Pavesi'"

When: May 1–30, 2015 and May 1–June 25, 2015

Where: Galerie Barbara Weiss, Kohlfurter Straße 41–43, Berlin, Germany

Born 1973
Lives and works in Berlin

Education

2003 Kunstfonds, Bonn Grant
1996 Gunther Schroff Grant HFG
Internship at Electronic Arts Intermix, New York
1998 Hochschule fur Gestaltung Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe

Solo Exhibitions

2023 Berta Fischer, Galerie Karin Guenther, Hamburg
2022 Berta Fischer, Bernier / Eliades, Athens
2020 Berta Fischer, Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin
2019 Berta Fischer, SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, GA
2019 Berta Fischer, James Fuentes, New York
2015 Galerie Karin Guenther, Hamburg, with Michael Bauch
Barbara Weiss Galerie - Project Space, Berlin
2013 Oldenburger Kunstverein, Oldenburg
Barbara Weiss, Berlin
2012 Karin Guenther, Hamburg
Martin Asbaek, Copenhagen
James Fuentes, New York
2011 Galerie Giti Nourbakhsh, Berlin
2008 Galerie Karin Guenther, Hamburg
2007 Galerie Giti Nourbakhsh, Berlin
Krobath Wimmer, Vienna, Austria
2006 Martin Asbaek Projects, Copenhagen, Denmark
2005 Hammelehle & Ahrens, Projektraum, Cologne
2004 Galerie Diana Stigter, Amsterdam
2003 Galerie Giti Nourbakhsh, Berlin
2001 Galerie Giti Nourbakhsh, Berlin
Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart
Wiensowski und Harbord, Berlin
1998 Koch and Kessler, Berlin

Group Exhibitions

2023 Karin Guenther at Kadel Willborn, Düsseldorf
2022 Mimicry—Empathy, Friche la Belle de Mai, Marseille,

France Christen Sveaas Art Foundation: The Travel Bureau, Selected by Paulina Olowska, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London
2020 Berta Fischer, Björn Dahlem & Naum Gabo: Into Space, Haus am Waldsee, A Place for the Arts, Berlin,
2019 Material Properties, Albertz Benda, New York
Galerie Karin Guenther, Hamburg
2018 Berta Fischer and Michael Bauch, Karin Guenther at Kadel Willborn, Düsseldorf
Berta Fischer, Ursula Ott, Thomas Schütte, Paloma Varga Weisz, Galerie Ute Parduhn, Düsseldorf,
FKLS, Galerie Karin Guenther, Hamburg
2019 Out of Office, Sara Hildén Art Museum, Tampere, Finland
Material Properties, curated by Margaret Liu Clinton, albertz benda, New York
SCAD deFINE ART, Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, GA
2016 RESET II and FUTURISM, PRISKA PASQUER, Cologne
Art Berlin Contemporary, Berlin, Germany
2015 Works on Paper, Greene Naftali Gallery, New York
A blur, a beautiful blurry blur, Galerie Karin Guenther, Hamburg, Germany
2014 Living in the material world, Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck
Living in the Material World. Materialität in der zeitgenössischen Kunst, Museen Haus Lange / Haus Esters, Krefeld, Germany; Taxispalais, Innsbruck, Austria
2013 Neon – Vom Leuchten der Kunst, Museum für Konkrete Kunst, Ingolstadt, Germany
Summer in the City, Martin Asbaek Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark
Artists against Aids, Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, Germany
Fritz Winter. Das Innere der Natur, Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Germany
Collection on Display, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich
Haus am Waldsee, Berlin

Chain, HORSE, Berlin
 Wie kommt das Neue in die Welt, Haus am Waldsee, Berlin
 Summer in the City, Martin Asbaek Gallery, Copenhagen
 2011 Arbeiten aus dem Bleistiftgebiet, Van Horn, Dusseldorf
 2010 At Home Galerie Giti Nourbakhsch, Berlin
 Seltsam, so lose im Raum, Schloss Agathenburg
 High Ideals & Crazy Dreams, compiled by Gerwald
 Rockenschaub, Galerie Vera Munro, Hamburg
 Fine Line, Georg Kargl Fine Arts, Vienna
 2009 Zeigen. Eine audiotour durch Berlin von Karin Sander, Temporare Kunsthalle, Berlin
 4 young Female Artistes, HAAS & FISCHER, Zurich
 Summer in the City, Martin Asbaek Gallery, Copenhagen
 2008 Parkkultur Rugen e.V.
 Migros Collection, Zurich
 2007 Summer in the City II – Map Group Show, Martin Asbaek Projects, Migros Collection, Zurich
 Prague Biennial, Prague
 Es gibt Dinge die kann man nicht erklären, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn
 Die Macht des dinglichen, Georg-Kolbe-Museum, Berlin
 2006 FRIEZE outdoor sculpture park, London (curated by David Thorp)
 BIG CITY LAB, Special exhibition at Art Forum Berlin, curated by Friederike Nymphius
 Summer in the City – Map Group Show, Martin Asbaek Projects, Copenhagen, Denmark
 2005 Lichtkunst aus Kunstlicht, Museum für Neue Kunst ZKM Karlsruhe
 Passion Beyond Reason, Wallstreet One, Berlin (curated by G. Rockenschaub & G. Miller)
 Celebration, Halle für Kunst, Luneburg
 Fax, Maes & Matthys Gallery, Antwerp (curated by Olivia Beckemeyer)
 2004 Waters and Watercolours, Georg Kargl, Vienna
 Galerie Karin Guenther Nina Borgmann
 Die Farben des Lebens. Hommage a Piero Siena, MUSEION Bozen
 Centro Cultural Andratx, Andratx Mallorca (curated by Alessandra Pace)
 Der Himmerl ist schon, undurchdringlich wie Marmor,

Hamburg
 It's all an illusion, Migros Museum, Zurich
 Galleria Galica, Milano (curated by Alessandra Pace)
 Invisible Beauty, Galerie Giti Nourbakhsch, Berlin
 2003 Look Both Ways Before You Cross, Galerie Gebr. Lehmann, Dresden
 Hot, Blue & Righteous, Galerie Giti Nourbakhsch, Berlin
 2002 Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw
 Ein Himmel wie blaues Porzellan, Villa Merkal, Esslingen
 The Collective Unconsciousness, Migrow Museum, Zurich
 NBK Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin/Kunstverein Gottingen
 2001 Not at Home, curated by S. Burner, Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart
 Montana Sacra. Circle 5" ZKM, Karlsruhe
 2000 Buchsenausen Ausstellungsraum, Innsbruck
 Videos, Galerie Giti Nourbakhsch, Berlin
 1996 Flow of Reaction, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin
 1995 International Video Festival, Knitting Factory, New York
 Pantelleria Oasi Multimediale, 1 Preis des Festivals, Sicilia
 1994 Videonale 6, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn
 1993 Dauerbrand, Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe

Bibliography

2012 Wie kommt das Neue in die Welt? Neue international Bildhauer in Berlin, exh. cat. Haus am Waldsee, Berlin 2012
 Andrea Hilgenstock, Werkstatt am Waldsee, in: tip Berlin, Juni 2012, p. 62, 63
 2011 Berta Fischer, ed. Giti Nourbakhsch, Berlin 2011
 2010 Rainer Unruh, High Ideas & Crazy Dreams, in: Kunstforum 2010, vol. 204
 2007 Stefan Koldehoff, Dinge, die man nicht erklären kann: Der Bonner Kunstverein zeigt „Ruinoase Abstraktion“, in: Monopol, April 2007
 Judith Borowski, Gut gemalt. Schwirrende Skulpturen: Berta Fischer, in: Financial Times, March 27, 2007
 Ingeborg Wiensowski, Taumelnde Skulpturen, Aus einer einzigen Acrylplatte formt Berta Fischer fragile Objekte: schimmernd, zitternd, in: Der Spiegel, February 2007

- Berta Fischer, catalogue published by Revolver – Archiv
für aktuelle Kunst
- 2004 Paola Tognon on Berta Fischer, exhibition catalogue, “Il
colore della vita/Die Farben des Lebens. Hommage a
Piero Siena”, Museion, Bozen-Bolzano, pp. 204-207
Elena di Raddo on Berta Fischer, tema celeste, Issue 105, p.
139
- 2003 Urs Steiner, “Latex-Lachen und Panzersperren:
Skulpturen im Migros Museum,” NZZ, Nr 137, June 16
Sassa Trulzsch on Berta Fischer, October
- 2002 Der Zauber des Verlangens, NBK Neuer Berliner
Kunstverein, Berlin/Kunstverein Gottingen
Claudia Spinelli, “Painterly Poetry for Today”, in: exh. Cat
“..Ein Himmel wie blaues Porzellan”, Villa Merkel, pp. 42-41.

Collections

Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst
Ludwig Museum Kortárs Muvészeti Múzeum