

MERET OPPENHEIM andenken

Showroom

Opening: March 23, 2023, 7pm

Duration: March 24 – May 13, 2023

Bettina M. Busse, Curator Bank Austria Kunstforum, Vienna, will speak at the opening.

andenken is a retrospective exhibition of sculptures, drawings and editions from the early 1930s to the 1980s - *andenken* in the sense of memories of and thoughts about Meret Oppenheim and her work.

In 1981 Galerie Krinzinger, Innsbruck presented with *Situation Schweiz* its first solo exhibition of Meret Oppenheim. In 1997 Ursula Krinzinger, in collaboration with Bettina M. Busse, curated the exhibition *eine andere Retrospektive*¹ which was shown at the Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem, Netherlands, the Uppsala Konstmuseum, Sweden, the Helsinki City Art Museum, Finland, and the Museum der Moderne, Rupertinum, Salzburg, following the exhibition at the Krinzinger Gallery in Vienna. *Originale 1932 – 1985* was the last exhibition at Galerie Krinzinger.

Meret Oppenheim's originality and artistic vision were the impetus for her many decades of dynamic work. From her beginnings in Paris in the 1930s to her career in Switzerland after the Second World War, she created unconventional groups of works full of wit that defy classification in clearly separable categories of medium, style and art movement. When she died in 1985 at the age of seventy-two, her oeuvre included not only objects made of assembled objects, narrative paintings and geometric abstractions, but also jewellery designs, sculptures in public spaces and poems.²

Meret Oppenheim was born in Berlin on October 6, 1913. She decided to become an artist while still in her teens and went to Paris in 1933 with the painter Irene Zurkinden. There she met Alberto Giacometti and Hans Arp, Man Ray photographed her for the cycle *Érotique voilée*, which earned her the reputation of the muse of the Surrealists. In 1936 she moved back to Basel. She lived and worked alternately in Paris, Bern and in Carona and died in Basel on November 15, 1985. Her works have been shown in numerous institutional exhibitions and retrospectives including *Fantastic Art, Dada Surrealism*, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1936; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1967; Museum der Stadt Solothurn/Kunstmuseum Winterthur/Wilhelm-Lehmbruck Museum, 1974; Kunsthalle Bern, 1984; Kunstmuseum Bern, 1987; Guggenheim Museum New York, 1996; Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, 2003; Bank Austria Kunstforum, Vienna/Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, 2013; and Kunstmuseum Bern, 2013. Most recently, her work was featured in the extensive retrospective Mon exposition 2021 at the Kunstmuseum Bern, 2022 at the Menil Collection, Houston Texas and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

¹ Catalogue: Meret Oppenheim: Eine andere Retrospektive/A Differnet Retrospektive, ed. by Galerie Krinzinger Vienna, Exhib. Cat. Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem/Uppsala Konstmuseum/Helsinki City Art Museum, Zurich/New York 1997

² from the foreword of the catalogue Meret Oppenheim Mon exposition, by Nina Zimmer, Dir. Kunstmuseum Bern/Zentrum Paul Klee, Rebecca Rabinow Dir. The Menil Collection, Houston, Glenn D. Lowry, Dir. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, ed. Nina Zimmer, Natalie Dupêcher, Anne Umland with Lee Colón and Nora Lohner, Hirmer Verlag, Munich, 2021

*Edelfuchs im Morgenrot
Spinnt sein Netz im Abendrot.
Schädlich ist der Widerschein,
Schädlich sind die Nebelmotten-
Ohne sie kann nichts gedeihen*

from a poem, 1934

"It is not always easy to be a young artist. "But when one speaks one's own, new language that no one understands yet, then he sometimes has to wait a long time until he hears an echo. It is still more difficult for a female artist ... With artists, one is used to them leading a life as it suits them - and the citizens turn a blind eye. But when a woman does the same, they do the opposite. That and many other things one has to put up with. Yes, I would even like to say that as a woman you have the obligation to prove through your lifestyle that you no longer consider the taboos with which women have been kept in a state of subjugation for thousands of years to be valid. Freedom is not given to you, you have to take it."

Meret Oppenheim in her acceptance speech on the occasion of the award of the Art Prize of the City of Basel 1974 on 16 Jan. 1975

"Thoughts are locked in my head like in a beehive. Later I write them down. The writing burned when the Library of Alexandria burned. The black snake with the white head is in the museum in Paris. Then it burns too. All thoughts ever thought roll around the earth in the great spirit sphere. The earth shatters, the spirit sphere bursts, the thoughts scatter in the universe where they live on in other stars."

From a later prose poem "Self-portrait since 50,000 BC, 1980

"Every idea is born with its form. I realise the ideas as they come into my head. One does not know where the ideas come from; they bring their form with them, just as Athena sprang helmeted and armoured from the head of Zeus, the ideas come with their dress."

Meret Oppenheim, 1982

"Drawings can be more spontaneous by their very means and often show the artist's intentions in a direct way."

Meret Oppenheim quoted after: Exhibition catalogue "Vom Zeichnen, Aspekte der Zeichnung 1960-1985", Frankfurter Kunstverein and other venues 1985/1986, p. 306.