

## Visitor Information

### Silvia Bächli

26th February to 29th May 2023

Silvia Bächli (\*1956 in Baden, lives in Basel) is considered one of the most important artists working in the medium of drawing. As early as the 1990s, her work was being shown internationally. In 2009, Silvia Bächli represented Switzerland at the Venice Biennale. The Museum Langmatt is exhibiting her new series of large-format works on paper. A loosely continuous band with longer intervals, they produce an installation-like, expansive energy and enter into an exciting dialogue with the historical picture gallery. With the aid of Silvia Bächli's painterly drawings, the Museum Langmatt illuminates the alternating relationships between the media of drawing and painting and thus the permeability of artistic genres today.

For the paint, gouache is used: it is water-soluble and has a broad spectrum of consistency from translucent to opaque. The title and format of the works created in 2022 are identical: "Farbfeld" ("Colour Field"), 102 x 72 cm. Sometimes two of these formats form a single one twice as large. These are drawings insofar as the individual brushstrokes – i.e., lines – are visible and paper is used as the carrier medium. At the same time, however, these works are also paintings, since the pictorial forms include filled-in shapes and liquid paint is used. The charm of these works lies in a meandering "in-between". The colours show rather muted, restrained values. They avoid polychrome opulence. Warm reddish-brown, highly present blue and reedy green tones predominate.

The colours appear simple and modest, as are the shapes of the colour fields and the brushstrokes. Restraint is imposed on them. In a certain way, it is an expression of contemplation, as if they were turned inwards and were listening to an inner world that was initially inaccessible to us. With no frames or glass, the artworks are attached to the grey fabric covering of the gallery only with fine needles. The papers are therefore permitted to behave according to their nature. They bulge or show gentle waves

The striking, formal restraint of the colours, shapes and presentation reveals an unexpected atmospheric richness: sometimes it is the magical transparency of the colours, sometimes it is the liquefied, dissolved concentrations of lines, and sometimes it is the carefully placed sequence of the works in the painting gallery that creates the quiet but paradoxically intense, internalised aura in these artworks that are positively

enchanting in the modesty of their materials. In a present day in which we are overwhelmed with images, we encounter in these artworks an almost provocative contemplation. In these reduced artworks, we are confronted with a lack of expectation, a modesty and a silence. Without sending superficial religious signals, the works seem transcendent, animated with soul, connecting with something that lies hidden in them or beyond their material form.

This pictorial thought process taking place in a sensual dialogue leads us to a crucial question: What do you – the picture – do to me? Where are you taking me? What memories do you put me in touch with? As individual as these paths may be, as different as the memories and associations, references to experiences or dreams may be, they all meet again at one point, which is this: the experience of encountering the infinite abundance of the world and the many facets of our own person in touching simplicity.

Silvia Bächli's "colour fields" can be understood as small islands of refuge in our increasingly fragile present day: in turbulent times, we find a calming opposite pole. The relative security of life within Western societies has been eroded over the recent years and decades. The "colour fields" are not a political statement. However, they lead us to a point of humility and an insight – that a very little can be far more than an abundance.

*Markus Stegmann*

The exhibition will be accompanied by a publication by Hatje Cantz Verlag Berlin with a text by Markus Stegmann and questions and answers with Silvia Bächli. The publication contains photographs of all works within the spaces of the Museum Langmatt. Brochure, German/English, 56 pages, 20 illustrations, CHF 19.80 / CHF 13.80 (discounted).

# LANGMATT

Museum Langmatt  
Stiftung Langmatt Sidney und Jenny Brown  
Römerstrasse 30  
CH-5401 Baden

info@langmatt.ch  
+41 (0)56 200 86 70  
[www.langmatt.ch](http://www.langmatt.ch)