

Stefanie Löser in conversation with Zora Kreuzer and Marcel Frey

Berlin, June 2018

SL: How did you come to plan an exhibition together? How did it develop?

MF: Initially I had been invited to make an exhibition at the V8 platform and I was attracted by the idea of taking the opportunity to do a joint project. With Zora I had the feeling for the first time that something like that could work at all, that it makes sense. For a lot of artists collaboration is rather unusual. Art is often the solitary struggle in the studio, although of course there are artist couples, duos and so on. For me the potential cooperation made the exhibition more exciting. Now, we could have used this opportunity to simply show our works side by side, that is what each of us had developed in the studio. But we don't want that, we would rather do something new together. For this you need a certain openness.

SL: So you don't want to use the exhibition for a mere presentation of each of your work?

MF: Exactly. The work, the artwork, will be produced on site. The space V8 in Karlsruhe is a project space that allows unconventional things because it's not regulated and not governed by the laws of the market, the public or other criteria.

SL: A kind of experimental space.

MF: In the ideal case.

ZK: It is, however, used rather traditionally. I had a look at the archive and I didn't for example find a single wall painting or light exhibition. So far there haven't been any of the media that I work with. Yet, I find the rooms super for site-specific artworks – a beautiful White Cube that offers many possibilities. That's why I'm excited to try something out there.

MF: I know the space very well and am also a member of V8, which has been around since 2005, that is for 13 years now – a long time for a project space. And Zora is absolutely right: most of the exhibitions went for rather classical media and forms of presentation.

SL: Do you already have an idea of the work that you want to make on site? How did you approach the development of this collaborative project?

ZK: We've set certain parameters. We are planning a wall painting for example for which we specified three colours: black, neon pink and neon yellow. Actually four if you take the white of the wall into account. That's first of all the framework and the palette that we want to use, the level on which we two come together as artists.

MF: I think one can see this easily: there is the neon, that's Zora, there is the black, that is Marcel. But I have the feeling that in terms of technique Zora has to move much further into my territory insofar as we work with spray-cans. And also in regards to the working process, which is more prevalent in my work than Zora's.

SL: *Zora, my first thoughts on seeing your works, especially the wall paintings, was that these look very carefully planned and conceived, very precise; the exact lines and compositions, also the combination of colours and their order.*

ZK: They are. However, my works are mostly produced on location according to what the space offers or what I discover in the space. I have a travel kit, in it are coloured fluorescent tubes and materials for wall painting. On site I do either one thing or the other, or a combination of both. The process is to first of all try everything out until I know what kind of work I'm going to make.

SL: *So you develop your works in and with real space and not in advance with photos, for example as a Photoshop montage or 3D model?*

ZK: That wouldn't work. You can have the best model but on site there are for instance plug sockets, some kind of pipe, a special surface quality – details that often aren't disclosed because people think they aren't relevant. But for me they are crucial when developing my work.

MF: This is why I completely trust Zora in all things that concern the setting, also with decisions about where we draw fields or lines. While experimenting, however, and also during the production of the V8-Edition, we realised that I'm more experienced with the material, with spray-paint strokes and application.

SL: *Will you develop the wall painting over several days or more spontaneously, like a performance in which you put everything on the wall in one go?*

MF: It should be like a dance through the space, whereby you know in advance how you're going to move. We made tests on a wall beforehand, which was mostly about technique. Spray-can strokes set in a certain way didn't feel quite right for us, so we experimented with piercing the cans and to put the colour on the wall that way.

ZK: The entire content of a can empties within one second.

MF: That way we can give the work the character of a happening.

SL: *And at the same time partly give up control.*

MF: Right.

SL: *So it's not necessarily composition but chance that determines the work?*

ZK: Chance is of course always relative, a lot of intuition goes into it as well.

MF: I once heard the quote 'Chance favours the prepared mind'. You have to learn to recognise the quality in chance...

SL: *Marcel, I know your paintings but I don't know much about your working methods in the studio. How do you go about working your canvases? Are the folds spontaneous and hence the lines that later*

produce the image accidental? Or do you know right from the beginning how the finished picture will look?

MF: By now I have a rough feeling for it but you can't count on it a hundred percent. You lose the feeling for top and bottom when folding and get disorientated because space gets superimposed. I never undo folds because otherwise creases in the canvas become visible that are not relevant for the composition. Because of that there are always rejects. With the wall work at V8 it is somewhat different because there we don't have the possibility for much correction. We expose ourselves to this and must rather adopt a stance towards the work.

SL: *So on the wall your respective approaches come together doubtlessly creating an exciting symbiosis. On the one hand there is Zora's precise conception, in which she has an exact picture of the result, planning every step ahead and carrying them out accurately while still reacting to the location. With you Marcel the end result stays somehow open...*

ZK: It's like you say, with Marcel there is this openness, he works more conceptually and the method of chance is an essential part of his art. When I work on canvas it is clear in advance what will happen on the canvas. In this our work differs.

SL: *How did you talk and exchange about your methods and working procedures, especially in regards to the joint exhibition in order to approach each other and to develop a joint idea?*

ZK: Exchange about work and to tell each other what one has been working on and to be interested in what others are doing is anyway firmly established in everyday life. The exchange has of course deepened in the light of this joint project. As a result we've become even more aware of the differences and similarities in our work.

MF: Last summer we've been to Zora's exhibitions in Freiburg. She and her work were really present while with me absolutely nothing happened. This summer I had the exhibitions and Zora took part in my processes. These experiences and this knowledge now coalesce in a joint project.

ZK: Marcel, for example, plans his exhibitions completely from A to Z with models – that's something I've never done. Usually I just enter the space with the material and look. That's extremely different.

MF: As regards the exhibition concept, the V8 project conforms more to Zora's way of working – to let something develop on site. The realisation on the other hand has more to do with my working methods, also technically.

SL: *Was it immediately clear for you that you wanted to work with spray-cans or were there other options? Is the wall work a drawing, a painting, or even graffiti?*

MF: I would tend to describe my sprayed works as more graphic and less painterly, even though strictly speaking they are paintings. Then again, the wall work at V8 is about a visible gesture, a type of performative approach. In addition, the spray-can has for me an industrial, typographical charm and something immediate because it is used as a painting tool between hand and image carrier. To draw a line with a roller or a brush is something very different to a spray-can.

ZK: There is the paint, and then there are the different ways to apply it whereby it actually becomes what you want it to be. Before that it's just material from the tube. In most cases I don't use pure colours, rather covering them with white or combining them with other colours that I always mix myself. In the past I painted my murals with a brush because it just looks different than with a roller – so even the same colour can be applied in very different ways. And spray-paint is again something completely different, you quickly get pigeon-holed with graffiti. In this exhibition we are using pure colour, pure neon. So I have to adjust and deviate from my principles. But I also really like to try something different, something new, because actually we want to free ourselves from all these associations.

MF: A lot of it is in your head. You expose yourself to the possibility of failure and also the possibility of being surprised. That's sometimes not easy at all, it raises the adrenaline and stress levels, you need basic trust in yourself and each other.

SL: *Whether one can fail though surely depends on the underlying objective, the question of what one is aiming at. Do you want to create a finished work resulting from both your working methods in symbiosis? Or is it also about trying things out, finding a common language, about the process that actually can't have a concrete result and therefore cannot fail?*

ZK: Ultimately, I would like to have a good exhibition, that's the objective.

MF: Of course it is true that in end we want to produce a good wall painting, a good picture or a good exhibition. But I do hope that after all people don't just think: they painted something nice on the wall, but that the processuality and, as it were, our 'negotiation' on the wall will also be perceptible.

SL: *Marcel, in your works the single steps of production merge visually in a way that eventually makes it unclear which step came first; one cannot make out a chronology. The same with you, Zora, there is only the finished picture. But at V8 it will be that each step is negotiated and one thing reacts to another – do you think that this sequence will be visible in the end result?*

ZK: Actually one shouldn't be able to, it's not about that. Like with the edition you will be able to see overlays on the wall but in the end all parts of the picture should sit together naturally.

MF: Yes, that is what I was just saying in relation to taking a stance. You have to free yourself from the desire to already know the end result.

SL: *Did either of you ever work together with someone else and jointly develop something? Or is this collaboration the first of its kind for you?*

ZK: I once painted pictures together with a painter colleague from Australia. In this collaboration I experienced that the consistency that each has in their own work somehow got lost along the way. So you could say Marcel and I are taking a risk.

MF: I had collaborations during my time at the Academy but not on the scale of what Zora and I are now approaching. I feel your nervousness, Zora, and basically I feel the same. Herein lies the excitement though, I like that.

SL: *Uncertainty harbours great potential.*

MF: Generally when approaching art this is a vital attitude, I think.

SL: *To break out of one's usual patterns?*

ZK: Yes, for me that's really important as an approach.

MF: If you already know exactly what you are doing in advance then nothing new develops. You only implement what you already knew. What experience can you then gain?

ZK: I mostly agree and in the end that might be the essence of our collaboration at V8.

Zora Kreuzer (b. 1986 in Bonn, lives and works in Berlin) studied Painting with Leni Hoffmann at the Art Academy Karlsruhe as well as at École Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs de Strasbourg and the Contemporary Art School in Tianjin, China. Exhibitions include E-Werk Freiburg, Pieterskerkhof – Museum de Lakenhal, Leiden, Kunstverein Lüneburg, Fremantle Biennale, 5 Walls Projects, Melbourne, Palais Thurn und Taxis, Bregenz, Pförtnerhaus, Freiburg, Perth Institute for Contemporary Arts, PS Artspace, Fremantle, and Museum für Konkrete Kunst, Ingolstadt. In 2014 Zora Kreuzer received a scholarship of the Christoph Merian Foundation in Fremantle, Australia, in 2016 she was artist-in-residence at PICA – Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts and in 2017 at Fremantle Arts Centre, Australia. In 2017 she received the Van Look Preis, Freiburg.

Marcel Frey (b. 1980 in Mönchengladbach, lives and works in Berlin) studied at the Art Academy Karlsruhe, where he finished as Meisterschüler of Silvia Bächli in 2008. Solo exhibitions include Städtische Galerie Karlsruhe, Kunststiftung Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart, Bruch & Dallas, Cologne, Centre Culturel Franco-Allemand, Karlsruhe. Group shows include Kunstverein Freiburg, Museum Biedermann, Donaueschingen, Kunsthaus Baselland, Simultanhalle, Cologne, and Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna. Marcel Frey received, amongst others, a scholarship of the Kunststiftung Baden-Württemberg in 2010, a scholarship of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in 2013 as well as a scholarship of the state of Baden-Württemberg for the Cité International des Arts, Paris in 2014. Since 2012, Frey is represented by Galerie Thomas Fischer in Berlin.

Stefanie Löser (b. 1987 in Quedlinburg, lives and works in Berlin) studied KulturGestaltung at Fachhochschule für Gestaltung in Schwäbisch Hall, Germany, and Curatorial Studies with a focus on „Exhibition & Education“ at Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, Zurich. In her master thesis „Artists, be nice to your Curator“, she dealt with the relationship between artists and curators. She realised curatorial projects in Schwäbisch Hall and Zurich. Since 2012, Stefanie Löser works at the Studio of Karin Sander where she is in charge of project coordination, catalogues and production.

in conversation with is a new exhibition format aiming at bringing people together through conversation and subsequent collaboration. Artists are invited to engage in dialogue with curators, authors, other artists, art historians, journalists or scientists and to develop an exhibition from it. The conversations are documented in writing, serving as text material accompanying the exhibition. They enable visitors to develop a deeper understanding of the artists' methods and of the artworks. *in conversation with* is based on the premise that it is the artists themselves who can best provide information about their works, their methods, their ideas and inspirations. One simply needs to ask. *in conversation with* was initiated in early 2018 by Katharina Wendler in Berlin and is guest of various (project) spaces.

Ausstellung

Marcel Frey / Zora Kreuzer

SUPERIMPOSE

July 7–10, 2018

Opening: Friday, July 6, 7 pm

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