



Women who do what they want

The Italian gallery Kaufmann Repetto bets on women artists - with success. The current group show "An ego of her own" is dedicated to the female dandy.

In these days the Kaufmann Repetto gallery entrance is flanked by two facade paintings by Maximiliane Baumgartner. The portrayed women are painted in pastel shades, they are almost transparent. "You look at us, we look at you" is the title of one of the works, which Baumgartner created for this current group show. It is reminding us of Anita Augspurg, the first female German doctor in law and a women's rights activist. Baumgartner, born 1986 in Southern Germany, wants to make women visible, and this has also been for the past twenty years the concern of the kaufmann repetto gallery.

Two thirds of the artists are women. At art fairs - like at the last ArtBasel - they often present exclusively works by female artists. The gallery is successful, while twenty years ago, when Francesca Kaufmann opened with a pink logo and a show of the very young Candice Breitz, nearly nobody would have believed the gallery would make it. "I wanted people to open their eyes and change the system" says the 52-year old, who worked for Esther Schipper in Cologne and for Metro Pictures in New York. She is sitting in the gallery venue of via di Porta Tenaglia 7 with senior director Astrid Welter, and both are in an excellent mood. Latifa Echakhch will do the Swiss Pavilion at the upcoming Venice Biennale, and they just learned that also another of their female artists will be presented in Venice.



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Bild: Kaufmann Repetto / Andrea Bowers

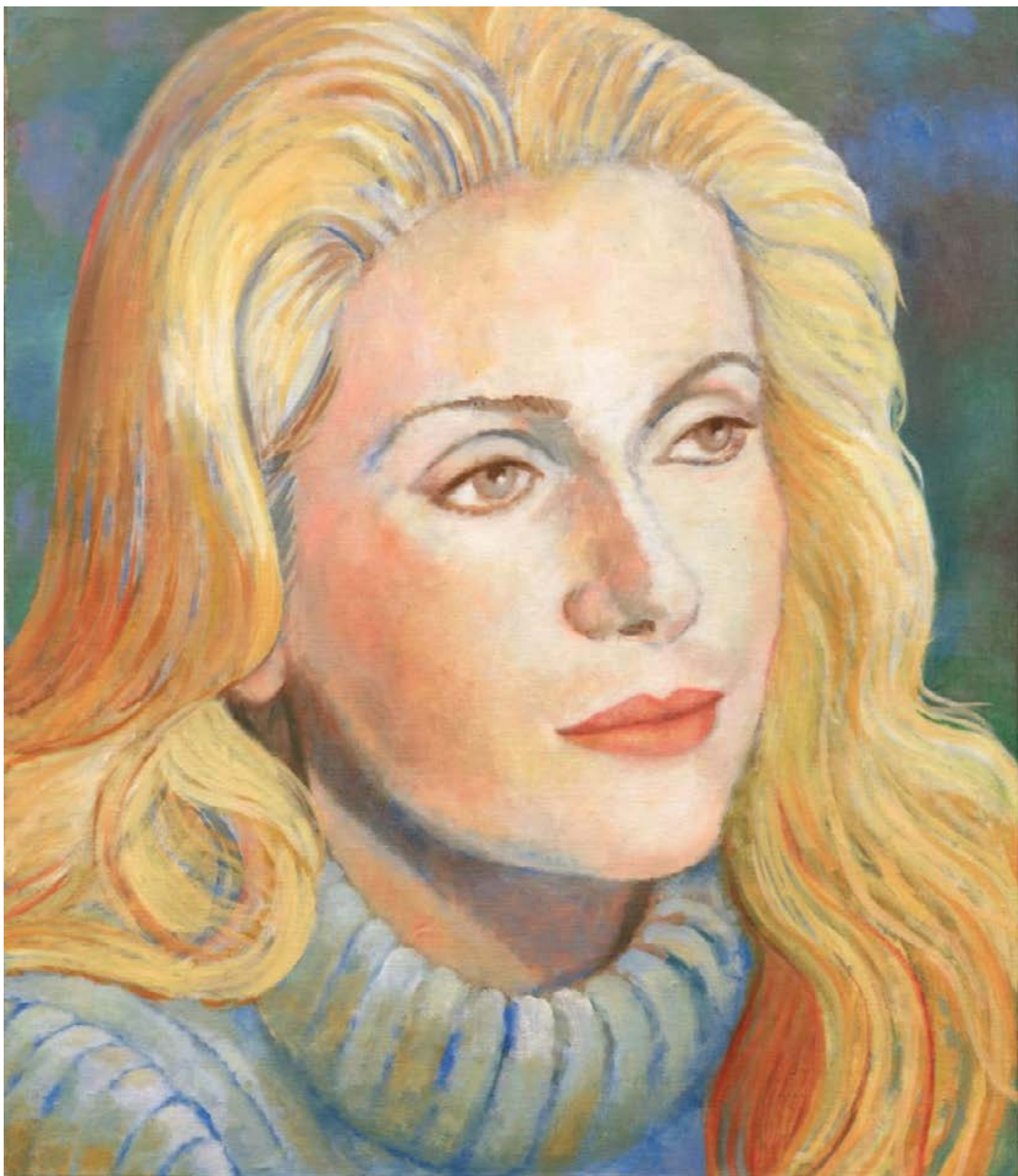
On the wall dozens of colourful fans are rising high, like many butterflies. On each of them there's a feminist slogan, in an installation by Andrea Bowers. "My favourite one says: „A feminist is a woman who doesn't want to be treated like shit'", says Welter. Before taking up her position at the gallery two years ago, the German Welter had been Head of Programs at Fondazione Prada, where she is still member of the board. "Luckily there has been a change in the awareness, most recently enhanced by the impact of Me too and the Black Lives Matter movement. Collectors and museums realise that they have rarely exhibited women." Right now some female artists of the gallery are becoming famous at an advanced age. For instance the sculptor Simone Fattal, born 1942, who is currently having her solo show at the Whitechapel Gallery in London; or the 92-year old Venezuelan Magdalena Suarez Frimkess, who will exhibit at the LACMA in Los Angeles in 2022.

Kaufmann Repetto is currently presenting in Milan an excellent group exhibition, "An Ego of her own - The female dandy", which will also be shown in the gallery's New York venue, which is led by Chiara

kaufmann repetto

Repetto, Francesca Kaufmann's sister. The group show is curated by director Amanda Schmitt, active in the Me too movement after her charge against an Artforum editor. The exhibition gathers twenty female artists, four of which German, who go their own way, as opposed to the male dandy whose ego finds confirmation in the gaze of others.

Silke Otto Knapp has specially painted "The Boat" for the exhibition. The watercolor, a 1,50 meter wide square, shows in shades of grey and black three women in a boat in front of a stormy sky, calmly steering forwards. Also the Los Angeles based Katja Seib has created new work, her small oil painting "Jimmy Schuh" is a wink at the classic Marian iconography: a woman's foot is crushing a snake. Birgit Megerle's contribution is ambiguous. Her painting "Wool", sized 70 per 60 centimeters, is based on a film still of a movie with Catherine Deneuve. She appears beautiful, unreachable, iconic - yet empty. During the French Me too debate the actress coauthored an open letter which expressed, in a broader sense: Women, don't make too much of a fuzz when you are grabbed a little bit, it never did anybody any harm.



Deneuve mit Rollkragen: Birgit Megerle, „Wool“, 2019, Öl auf Leinwand, 70 mal 60 Zentimeter, Preis auf Anfrage Bild: Kaufmann Repetto