

IN ITS PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE ROTUNDA, THE SCHIRN PRESENTS A NEW INTERACTIVE INSTALLATION BY MARUŠA SAGADIN

MARUŠA SAGADIN

LUV BIRDS IN TOTEN WINKELN

SEPTEMBER 21, 2023 – JANUARY 14, 2024

PRESS PREVIEW: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2023, 11 A.M.

Who is building? What, for whom, and where is it? Influenced by architectural history, Maruša Sagadin's (b. 1978) artistic investigations revolve around the social context of a building or location. Her works find their impetus in the intersection of private and public space, combining elements of architecture, sculpture, and painting. On the occasion of Slovenia's participation as Guest of Honour at the Frankfurter Buchmesse (Frankfurt Book Fair) 2023, the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt presents a site-specific installation by the artist in its Rotunda from September 21, 2023, to January 14, 2024. With "Luv Birds in toten Winkeln", the artist interacts with the conditions of the Rotunda as a semi-public space, assembling together monumental sculptures from three key groups of works, which allude to passageways, pillars, and benches; the entire installation can be traversed by visitors or used as a spot to linger. Sagadin's attention is focused on often overlooked architectural structures, which she imbues with new meanings, functions, and physical associations. Her use of humor and exaggeration, both in her formal language and in her use of color, exposes the social mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion found in urban built environments, while breaking with established norms of viewing art. Playfully subversive, her works reference elements of popular culture, subculture, and the applied arts. Through an interplay of gender, language, and sculpture, they subvert existing norms and approach sculpture as a means of making things visible.

The exhibition "Maruša Sagadin: Luv Birds in toten Winkeln" is supported by the Slovenian Ministry of Culture and SKICA Berlin - Slovenian Cultural Centre Berlin in the context of Slovenia's Guest of Honour presence at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2023 and by the SCHIRN ZEITGENOSSEN.

Dr. Sebastian Baden, director of the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, says: "With her installation created specifically for the Schirn Rotunda, Maruša Sagadin invites us to view and occupy public space in a new way. The artist is concerned with creating infrastructures with her sculptures that function without predefined usages, in turn enabling new forms of accessibility and interaction. In this way, Sagadin creates important impulses for questioning discursive fixations. Her art opens up new perspectives on our cityscape, as well as on physicality, communication, and participation in society."

Marie Oucherif, curator of the exhibition, notes: "In her work, Maruša Sagadin examines issues of spatial design, sculpture, and feminism. The installation in the Schirn's Rotunda combines these three elements to encourage reflection on the social and gender inequalities inscribed in urban public space. Nonetheless, this is always done with a wink and a smile—Sagadin's works combine lightness and joy with profound reflection."

Taking "blind spots" as the intellectual point of departure for her installation in the Schirn's Rotunda, Sagadin considers the contradictions inherent in quotidian architecture in urban space, such as staircases, sidewalk curbs, and rows of houses. By definition, blind spots can be difficult to observe, dangerous, or obstructive, but at the same time they can serve as places of retreat,

rest, or hiding. With “Luv Birds in toten Winkeln”, the artist thus refers to places on the periphery of our gaze, and the possibility of granting them new meanings. Her sculptures made of wood, concrete, and cardboard convey accessibility through their set-like appearance, bright colors, cartoonish elements, and sprawling forms that immediately invite interaction. The humorous titles of her works often function as parodic proverbs, playfully highlighting the disconnect between language and attribution. A recurring motif throughout Sagadin’s work are stylized body parts that create a sense of intimacy: for instance, the four works produced specifically for the exhibition—*Luv Bird (Noses)*, *Luv Birds (Tongues)*, *Luv Bird (Belly)*, and *Schlechter Witz [Bad Joke]* (all 2023)—create a direct relationship with the viewer through their overproportioned body parts. Huge noses, licking tongues, and rounded bellies additionally resist conventional attributions and challenge what it means for bodies (or parts of bodies) to fall outside of societal norms. Other works, such as *Paravent [Screen]* (2022) and *Nasse Füße [Wet Feet]* (2022), are passages made of facade components that interrupt the Rotunda’s space; they create interstices for alternative perspectives and open up new paths through the exhibition. In addition, sculptural benches such as *Selbe Schuhe, andere Wohnung [Same Shoes, Different Apartment]* (Luisa), *Schlechte Laune ohne Kiosk und Küche [Bad Mood without a Kiosk and Kitchen]* (Juliana), and *Summer* (all 2020) offer a place to linger and sit, much like more comfortable sidewalk curbs. They thus resist conventional notions of art’s reception as one that is active, rational, and the prerogative of upright bodies. At the same time, they call for a critical examination of established forms of viewing art by encouraging viewers to engage in aesthetic contemplation while at rest.

Maruša Sagadin (b. 1978, Ljubljana) lives and works in Vienna. She studied architecture at the Graz University of Technology and performative art and sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. She has been presented in major group and solo exhibitions at international institutions, including at the MAK Center for Art and Architecture, Mackey Apartments Garage Top, Los Angeles (2022); Cukrarna Gallery, Ljubljana (2022); Hobusepea Gallery, Tallinn (2021); Belvedere 21, Vienna (2021); the Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst und Medien, Graz (2018); Secession, Vienna (2018); and SPACE, London (2016).

The exhibition is supported by the SCHIRN ZEITGENOSSEN, a circle of private sponsors of contemporary art at the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt. The Schirn would like to thank Jan Bauer and Lena Wallenhorst, Jochen and Anja Baumann, Olaf Gerber and Nicole Emmerling de Oliveira, Markus Hammer and Birgit Heller, Philip Holzer, Björn Robens, Reiner Sachs and Brigitta Bailly as well as Julia Schönbohm and Ralf Böckle for their commitment to the project.

Contemporary positions have previously been presented in the Rotunda of the Schirn by artists such as Monster Chetwynd (2023), Amna Elhassan (2022), Carlos Bunga (2022), Caroline Monnet (2020), Karla Black (2019), Maria Loboda, Neil Beloufa (2018), Philipp Fürhofer, Lena Henke (2017), Rosa Barba, Peter Halley (2016), Heather Phillipson, Alicja Kwade (2015), Andreas Schulze (2014), Yoko Ono (2013), Bettina Pousttchi (2012), Barbara Kruger (2010), Eva Grubinger (2007), Jan De Cock (2005), Ayşe Erkmen, and Ólafur Eliasson (2004).

CATALOG *Maruša Sagadin: Luv Birds in toten Winkeln* edited by Marie Oucherif, with an essay by Marie Oucherif, and a foreword by the director of the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Sebastian Baden, German/English edition, 44 pages, approx. 20 illustrations, 22 x 28.5 cm, softcover, figuratively die-cut, Verlag Kettler, ISBN 978-3-98741-063-5, € 15 (Schirn), € 20 (bookstores).

SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT

EXHIBITION OPENING The exhibition “Luv Birds in toten Winkeln” will open on September 20, 2023, at 7 p.m. with a DJ set by Anásta of Ustanova Platform (Ljubljana). The artist Maruša Sagadin will be present.

PERFORMANCE BY LIINA MAGNEA On October 10 and 11, 2023, both at 7 p.m., Liina Magnea (b. 1991) combines music, movement, film dramaturgy and internet scrolling into an immaterial Gesamtkunstwerk in a dynamic performance in the installation.

ARTIST TALK AND BOOK LAUNCH On October 22, 2023, at 11 a.m., Maruša Sagadin and curator Marie Oucherif will talk about the context surrounding the exhibition and introduce the accompanying publication.

LOCATION SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT, Römerberg, 60311 Frankfurt am Main

DURATION September 21, 2023 – January 14, 2024 **ADMISSION** free **INFORMATION** www.schirn.de **EMAIL** welcome@schirn.de **TELEPHONE** +49.69.29 98 82-0 **CURATOR** Marie Oucherif **SUPPORTED BY** by the Slovenian Ministry of Culture and SKICA Berlin - Slovenian Cultural Centre Berlin in the context of Slovenia’s Guest of Honour presence at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2023 and by the SCHIRN ZEITGENOSSEN

HASHTAG #MARUSASAGADIN #SCHIRN **FACEBOOK, TWITTER, YOUTUBE, INSTAGRAM, PINTEREST, TIKTOK, SCHIRN MAGAZIN** www.schirn.de/en/magazin

PRESS Johanna Pulz (Head of Press/PR), Julia Bastian (Deputy Head of Press/PR), Thea Stroh (Trainee) **SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT** Römerberg, 60311 Frankfurt am Main **TELEPHONE** +49.69.29 98 82-148 **EMAIL** presse@schirn.de