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fondation suisse pour la culture
prohelvetia



**CLAUDIA & JULIA MÜLLER
UNE BRÈVE HISTOIRE DE BASKETS
SALES**

12.09 - 14.11.2021

PREVIEW

FRI 10.09.2021 10:00 - 13:00

OPENING

SAT 11.09.2021 17:00 - 21:00

Contact:

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curator : Claire Hoffmann

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Le CCS est une antenne de la Fondation suisse pour la culture Pro Helvetia.



Claudia & Julia Müller (*1964; *1965) stage familiar or mysterious situations in large-scale, partly hand-drawn murals, fusing figurative representation with ornaments and fragments, abstraction and dissection. Drawing on their vast archive of images, they examine looks exchanged, power structures, and the interrelation of affection and animosity; in short, the entire contradictory range of human existence. Using portraiture along with an installation of painted lamps that connects interior and exterior spaces, the exhibition at the CCS focuses on moments of transition, forms of living together, and situations of fragility and reorientation.

The Müller sisters take images from their archive and reproduce them in the form of large-scale, partly hand-drawn murals. This process allows them to highlight elements that may at first glance seem to veil or reveal human behaviors. Julia Müller defines their artistic practice as a means both of stepping back from human nature, the better to analyze it, and of accessing the obscurer recesses of their minds: *“For me, it is [...] a study of the strange areas and my projections and prejudices towards them. Redrawing is like rethinking your opinions; thus, the material is kept alive.”¹*

Their method of reactivating images through manual repetition is a way of “slowing down” the gaze in the present day, a time increasingly flooded by photographic images. Propelled by our desire to see, our pleasure in seeing (—“visual pleasure,” à la Laura Mulvey), as well as by our exhibitionist tendencies, images have gained unforeseeable importance, or omnipresence, even. This overexposure can also, paradoxically, obscure our capacity to see, or rather, to recognize whatever it is we see. To select or be arrested by a specific image, to analyze it by copying and translating the data—something digital, ephemeral, immaterial—into a more permanent form—the hand-drawn mural—therefore allows the artists as well as their public to appropriate a different way of seeing the image (differently). Their research insofar has much in common with Walter Benjamin’s concept of the “optical unconscious.”

However, the artists’ practice of gleaning and transforming images never sinks into nostalgic comparison or comments on the evolution of communications technology and image (re)production (which they themselves assiduously use). Their slightly off-kilter gaze zooms in rather, on habits and gestures, and it is this which enables them to differentiate certain aspects of contemporary life.

Adam Szymczyk, in conversation with Claudia & Julia Müller, once drew a parallel between their artistic practice and Giorgio Agamben’s definition of contemporaneity.² According to Agamben—whose work is grounded in Nietzsche’s concept of the untimely—any evocation of the past, any taste for the anachronistic, is a sign of the lucidity required to interpret the present. Seen from this angle, the present (and its somber aspects) can only ever be revealed by falling out of step with it.³ *Une brève histoire de baskets sales* (A Brief History of Dirty Sneakers) takes individual change as its point of departure, threshold moments of transformation and personal quests that arise when coming of age.

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The Müller sisters draw on their own experience, in addition to observation and research.

The installation at the Swiss Cultural Center consists in large textile objects printed with digital paintings. The walls are covered with sketches of a monumental bodyscape, inhabited by small figurative drawings in black and white. The Müller sisters often use (self) portraiture and thereby consider the backdrop to such likenesses, namely the particular ways people want to see and be seen, *“Our interest and research [being] the problems of humans, and into how people represent themselves towards others.”*⁴

The walls speak of palimpsest and shadows. The Müller sisters tread a thin line between the image in the making and the finished product, equally welcoming moments of focus and blur. They also mix analog and digital ways of deleting images, from the rubber eraser to the Photoshop version. In these murals of the unseen, silhouettes and sharply contoured details are strikingly contrasted. Fragments surface like remarkable periods or unforgettable encounters, forever anchored in memory—yet subject nonetheless to the shifting tides and lights of the subconscious.

The exhibition venue and its inner courtyard are occupied by large print sculptures, organic forms that resemble human silhouettes and household lanterns, so melding interior and exterior space.

These two installations in juxtaposition—one outside, the other inside, one abstract, the other mimetic—are evidently in dialogue. In a sense, they reflect a process of twofold creation which thrives on disagreement, on the to and fro and back and forth of autonomous sisters/artists, which, while not necessarily ending in happy compromise, yet allows articulation of two possible paths (and voices).

— Claire Hoffmann
Translation Jill Denton

1 Adam Szymczyk in conversation with Claudia & Julia Müller „Ah, speak for yourself!‘ On the recent practice of Claudia & Julia Müller“, in: *Claudia & Julia Müller*, ed. Barbara Krimm, Claudia & Julia Müller, argobooks, Berlin, 2014, p. 117-122, ici p. 115.

2 Ibid, ici p. 121.

3 Giorgio Agamben, „What Is the Contemporary?“, in: *What Is an Apparatus?*, Stanford University Press, 2009.

4 Adam Szymczyk in conversation with Claudia & Julia Müller „Ah, speak for yourself!‘ On the recent practice of Claudia & Julia Müller“, in: *Claudia & Julia Müller*, ed. Barbara Krimm, Claudia & Julia Müller, argobooks, Berlin, 2014, p. 117-122, ici p. 113.

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Éléments biographiques

Claudia & Julia Müller (* 1964 and * 1965) live and work in Basel and Berlin. They studied at the Basel School of Art, Julia graduated in textile design and Claudia continued her studies in Germany. The sisters have been creating as a duo since 1991. They create multi-faceted works combining wall drawings, installations, videos and objects. In recent years, they have focused their reflections on contemporary social phenomena, exploring human relationships and revealing the contradictory facets that characterize them.

They have participated in numerous group exhibitions in Switzerland and abroad, including Taller 108 in Lima (2019), Kunstmuseum Basel (2017), Maccarone Inc. New York (2015), Kunsthaus Zurich (2015), Kunsthalle Nürnberg (2014), MoMA New York (2009), MOCA Miami (2008), and the De Appel Foundation in Amsterdam (2007).

The sister-artists also take on public spaces by winning competitions mixing art and architecture with, among others, the sculpture Geschwister Tanner in a school in Uster (Switzerland) in 2019, the ceramic carpet It's this rug I have, it really tied the room together in a school in Basel (Switzerland) in 2016, and the ceramic wall Ficelle at the Residential House Birsfelden in Basel in 2013.

Claudia and Julia Müller have received several awards, including the Meret Oppenheim Prize (2010) and the Kantonalbank Kunstpreis Baselland (2010) for their work together. They have been residents at MoMA PS1 in New York (1999).

In parallel to their artistic practice, Claudia Müller has been a professor at the HEAD in Geneva since 2007 and Julia Müller has been teaching at the Kunstakademie in Karlsruhe (Germany) since 2005. They have taught and lectured at numerous private and public schools and institutions such as PS1 (New York), Piet Zwart Institute (Rotterdam), Kunstmuseum (Bern), Hochschule für Bildende Künste (Braunschweig).

Their work is represented by the galleries Peter Kilchmann (Zurich), Mehdi Chouakri (Berlin), Karin Günther (Hamburg) and Maccarone (New York).

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SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2020 Palazzina, Bâle, Suisse, avec Zara Idelson

Une brève histoire de baskets sales, Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris, France

2019 *Der Weiche Blick*, Musée des Beaux-Arts, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland

2018 *They are still setting up. Let's go somewhere else*, Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin, Allemagne

2015 *Claudia & Julia Müller. Umkehrschub*, Maccarone, New York, États-Unis

2010 *Claudia & Julia Müller*, Museum Franz Gertsch, Burgdorf, Suisse

2009 *Menschenzoo*, Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck, Autriche

Persönliche Erfahrungen: Mimik, Kunstverein Friedrichshafen, Zeppelinmuseum, Friedrichshafen, Allemagne, cur. Andrea Jahn

2008 *Tut tut tut.*, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Allemagne, cur. Christina Végh, *Das Dilemma des Sichtbaren*, Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zürich, Suisse

2006 *Peacemaker*, Galerie Karin Guenther Nina Borgmann, Hambourg, Allemagne

2004 *Europäische Fantasien*, Grazer Kunstverein, Graz, Autriche, cur. Eva Maria Stadler

Human Territories, Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart, Allemagne
Claudia & Julia Müller, Kunstmuseum Thun, Thoune, Suisse, cur. Madeleine Schuppli, ex.cat.

2003 *Claudia & Julia Müller. Con quién dejamos a nuestros hijos e hijas?*, Espacio Uno, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Espagne, cur. Amelie López-Aranguren

2002 *Idylls*, Michele Maccarone, New York, États-Unis

2001 *hotcocolab*, Los Angeles, États-Unis, avec Richard Wright
Foyer: Claudia und Julia Müller, Kunsthalle Basel, Suisse

1998 *Eurobilder*, Galerie Monika Reitz, Francfort-sur-le-Main, Allemagne
1997 Kunsthalle Basel, Suisse

1996 *Restgefühl*, Kunsthalle Fri-Art, Fribourg, Suisse, (avec M.F. and P. Martin)

Entzündliche Bilder, Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zürich, Suisse

1995 Kunsthalle St. Gallen, St. Gallen, Suisse
Galerie Monika Reitz, Frankfurt, Allemagne

1994 *Es ist offengestanden sehr beruhigend*, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Bâle, Suisse

1992 Galerie Skopia, Nyon, France

GRANTS, AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2017 Kuratorium, Kanton Aargau

2010 Kulturpreis, Kanton Baselland

Prix Meret Oppenheim, Bundesamt für Kultur, Berne

2004 Kulturpreis, Kanton Baselland

1999 P.S. 1, New York

1996 Werkpreis Basel-Stadt

1995 Kuratorium Kanton Aargau, Atelieraufenthalt Paris

1994 Rheinbrücke-Kunstpreis

Förderpreis, Kanton Baselland

1993 Kiefer Hablitzel, St. Gallen

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PUBLIC PROJECTS

Kunstmuseum Basel, MoMA New York, The Judith Rothchild Foundation, Collection Deutsche Bank, Sammlung Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft Kunsthaus Zürich, Collection Frac Alsace, Susan and Michael Hort Collection, New York, Collection de Bruin-Heijn, The Netherlands, Collection F. Hoffmann-La Roche, Sammlung Credit Suisse, Städtische Sammlung Karlsruhe, Sammlung Sturzenegger Stiftung, Ann and Marshall Webb Collection, Toronto

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY – MONOGRAPHS, BOOKS AND (EXHIBITION) CATALOGUES

- 2019 "Claudia and Julia Müller", *Der Weiche Blick*, Alice Henkes, *Kunstbulletin* 9/2019 (<https://bit.ly/3a6PrDK>)
"Der grösste Teppich Basel", Silvio Schubiger, *Architektur Basel*, avril (<https://bit.ly/2HYCwrF>)
- 2016 "Schlaf und Rauch", Kristin Schmidt, cat. *Off the Wall*, Kunsthalle Nürnberg
- 2015 "Reverse thrust: the Müller Sisters invert aesthetic norms at Maccarone", Ann Binlot, *Wallpaper*, septembre (<https://bit.ly/393kd05>)
"Claudia & Julia Müller", Monograph, ed. Christiane Rekade avec des textes de Nina Zimmer, Adam Szymczyk et Anna Wesle
"Claudia & Julia Müller", *Zeichnung als Möglichkeit gesellschaftlicher Analyse*, Ines Goldbach, ex cat. pp. 51 - 53
- 2012 "Kunst in der Konferenzzone Uetlihof 2", André Rogger, Barbara Hatebur, *Credit Suisse*, Zürich, pp. 3, 7, 20-23
- 2011 "Claudia & Julia Müller", Simon Baur, *Künstler – Kritisches Lexikon der Gegenwartskunst* No. 93/ 6
- 2010 "Yesterday will be better", Madeleine Schuppli, Stephan Kunz, a.o., Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau, pp. 16, 162–165, 203, 216, ex. cat.
"Voici un Dessin Suisse 1990-2010", Julie Enckell Julliard, Daniel Baumann, Stéphane Cecconi a.o., Musée Rath, Geneva, JRP Ringier Kunstverlag AG, Zürich, ex.cat, pp. 12, 61-64, 249, 254
- 2009 "Frac Alsace / Catalogue des Acquisitions 2003 – 2007", Olivier Kaeser a.o., Frac Alsace, Sélestat Cedex, pp. 126-127, cat.
"Habitus vs. Habitus: Primaten. Dingspiel und Manipulation im Affenhaus" Christoph Keller Editions, JRP Ringier Kunstverlag AG, Zürich, cat.
- 2008 "Zwei Schwestern, ein Werk", Adam Sobozcynski, *Die Zeit*
"Dark Continent", Ruba Katrib, Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami, pp. 30-33, ex.cat.
- 2007 "Kunst und Oeffentlichkeit", Tim Zulauf a.o., Institut für Kunst und Medien, HGK, Zürich, pp. 359-374, cat.
"Die 50 wichtigsten Künstler der Schweiz", Jörg Becher, Echtzeit Verlag, Bâle, pp. 78-81

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Images

Exhibition views available starting 14.09



Image 1: Claudia & Julia Müller, *Kinder lachend auf Sofa*, 2021. Courtesy the artists.

Image 2: Claudia & Julia Müller, *Turnschuhe*, 2021. Courtesy the artists.



Image 3: Claudia & Julia Müller, *Zwei Buden*, 2021. Courtesy the artists.

Image 4: Claudia & Julia Müller, *Reverse Thrust (Female Contraposition)*, mix media on canvas, 2018.
Photo : Jose Andres Ramirez Jonas. Courtesy the artists.

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Images

Exhibition views available starting 14.09



Image 5: Claudia & Julia Müller, *digital_desire*, detail from *Der weiche Blick* (acrylic on wall), 2019.
Photo : Stefan Altenburger. Courtesy the artists.

Image 6: Claudia & Julia Müller, *kids_in_bed_chill_and_netflix*, detail from *Der weiche Blick* (acrylic on wall), 2019. Photo : Stefan Altenburger. Courtesy the artists.



Image 7: Claudia & Julia Müller, *zwei Teenagers*, 2021. Courtesy the artists.
Image 8: Claudia & Julia Müller, Studio shot, 2021. Courtesy the artists.

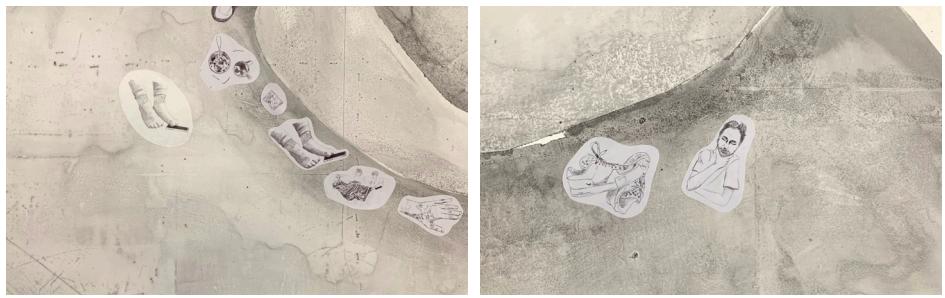


Image 9: Claudia & Julia Müller, Studio shot, 2021. Courtesy the artists.
Image 10: Claudia & Julia Müller, Studio shot, 2021. Courtesy the artists.

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Centre culturel suisse. Paris

The Centre culturel suisse (CCS) aims to promote contemporary Swiss artistic and cultural creation in France through its programming and to encourage exchange between the artistic scenes of the two countries. The Centre culturel suisse is part of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.

Informations pratiques

Claudia & Julia Müller

Une brève histoire de baskets sales
12.09 - 14.09.2021
preview 10.09 10:00-13:00
opening 11.09 17:00-21:00

Talks

Conversation between Ulla von Brandenburg and Claudia & Julia Müller
Saturday, September 25 at 4 pm

Art mediation

Curator tour by Claire Hoffmann, on Thursday October 21st at 5 pm
Flash visit : a 20' tour by our art mediators Delphine Mellies, Yael Miller and Indra Berger every week-end at 4 pm
Group visit upon request to Anna Terp : accueil@ccsparis.com

On going at the same time

Denise Berstchi *Oasis of Peace. Neutral Only On The Outside*
12.09 - 14.09.2021

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exhibitions Tuesday - Sunday 13:00–19:00

Bookstore
32 rue des Francs-Bourgeois 75003 Paris
Tuesday - Friday 10:00-19:00
Saturday - Sunday 13:00-19:00

Exhibition : free
Shows : 7 € / 12 €
Screenings : 3 €
Talks : free

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