

SYLVIE FLEURY

BRONZE SCULPTURES

SALZBURG VILLA KAST

29 Sunday - 25 Saturday



We take pleasure in announcing a solo exhibition by the Swiss artist Sylvie Fleury. The focus of the exhibition will be seven bronze sculptures, created around the year 2000 and rated among Fleury's most popular works, as well as one sculpture – its form dating back to the iconic Birkin bag by Hermès – made especially for the exhibition. For *White Gold*, as this sculpture is called, Fleury used for the first time a palladium surface applied to the sculpture like gold plate. In addition, we will be showing three new neon works from the *Yes to All* series, and in the garden of the gallery, a group of sculptures from the *Mushrooms* series, all of which were exhibited in Fleury's extensive retrospective at the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain (MAMCO) in Geneva (2008/09).

Sylvie Fleury is known for her tender, cynical critique of consumer culture as played out in the worlds of beauty, fashion and luxury products. Although at first glance her works may seem like an affirmation of the consumer society and its values, on closer inspection a more subtle commentary on superficial beauty becomes apparent. Her objects, wall pieces, pictures and installations assume an intrinsic value far exceeding the mere affirmation of brand names.

Hence, the slogans Fleury renders in brass letters, in crystal or neon writing are not merely the logos of internationally renowned couture houses, perfumeries or glossy magazines. By using these logos, Fleury evokes humanity's ideals and aspirations related to them. The slogan *Yes to All* refers not only to the profane computer command in the Microsoft operating system, but it can also be seen as a cynical comment of neo-liberalist politics where places like shopping malls become ritual pilgrimage sites, and retail therapy an aspirational hobby in most worlds cultures today.

Sylvie Fleury's bronze sculptures always demonstrate detailed knowledge of the artistic aesthetics of Pop Art and Minimal Art, without her work developing into Art on Art, but finding its identity in what Andreas Schallhorn aptly described as "virtue of the surface". The verve of Fleury's sculptures lies in their materiality, their significance in the artistic *mise-en-scène* of the mix of aesthetic manipulation mechanisms (advertising, fashion, colour, materials) and secondary needs (beauty, relaxation, satisfaction of desire). In the mid-1990s Eric Troncy pointed out that Fleury's sculptures were so positively and provocatively superficial, because she undermined the informed expectations and reception patterns of 1980s art – and this was precisely where her incomparable quality lay. Moreover, no artist has probably ever combined the idea of Duchamp's *Ready Made* with Warhol's affirmation of the consumer world in such an unbiased way. In Fleury's sculptures, the profane assumes an aura of sanctity.

One is inclined to associate Fleury's *Mushrooms* with a reference to hallucinogenic drugs, but also with the world of fairy-tales: the viewer imagines himself like Alice in Wonderland. In Fleury's *Mushrooms*, these strategies of infantilisation and caricature are combined with a reference to the male-connoted world of motorsports: the fibre-glass structures with multiple coats of lacquer are reminiscent of the tuning culture for sports cars. They generate a disconcerting frisson in view of the creation of such hybrid worlds and the subtle combination of masculine and feminine.

Sylvie Fleury (*1961) lives and works in Geneva. Since the early 1990s, Fleury's work has been exhibited and included in important public collections such as those of the New York Museum of Modern Art, Centre for Art and Media (ZKM) in Karlsruhe, Daimler Contemporary in Berlin, Migros Museum of Contemporary Art in Zurich, Museum of Applied Arts/Contemporary Art (MAK) in Vienna and Museum der Moderne (MdM) in Salzburg. Her most important solo exhibitions have been at the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain in Geneva (2008/2009), ZKM in Karlsruhe and Magasin Centre National d'Art Contemporain de Grenoble (2001), Villa Merkel Esslingen (1999) and Migros Museum of Contemporary Art (1998).

