

Katharina Ziemke

Press Release

Katharina Ziemke «Two o' clock jump»

The artist Katharina Ziemke stages a confusing game between past und present. Then and today merge. The atmosphere of the past is made accessible as if it had updated itself in the here and now.

The exhibition title “Two o'clock jump” refers to a 1937 composition by Count Basie, the famous pianist, organist, and big band leader (One o'clock Jump) and thus to an era of feverish musical innovation: the era of swing and the lindy hop. An ink painting measuring five metres shows a big band from that time, and the brightly-coloured grattages and additional ink paintings show dancing couples from various epochs – couples from the 1940s and current dancers, but it is impossible to assign the individual dancers to one particular epoch.

The brightness of the colours and their simultaneously vehement and harmonious interrelationships stand in contrast to the very flowing ink works. The technique of liquid ink on the extremely thin, almost transparent rice paper enables the artist to start swinging, like the musicians, and she only retains partial control in the execution, seeking a balance between spontaneity and control. The diluted ink, the gray of the shadows, and the rich palette of nuances of brightness lend these works an airy lightness and simultaneously, although this is a contradiction, a powerful intensity.

Today there are few opportunities to experience old dance halls in their authenticity. This is subtly reinterpreted in the sound installation which Daniel Freitag conceived especially for this exhibition. Aurally, we are right in the middle of it all and hear the tuning of instruments, the musicians warming up, mistakes, set pieces, musical motifs in isolation – like an echo of past fabulous parties, without however directly recalling the music of the 1930s. Due to the presence of a dancing couple, the gallery space itself becomes a ballroom.

In her sculpture The Dance Katharina Ziemke gives the dancers, who are otherwise only represented two-dimensionally, flesh and materiality. The figures don't have heads, the focus is entirely on the bodies and the dynamics of movement.

Way back when, today, here, elsewhere – everything merges in movement, rhythm, sound.

Katharina Ziemke (born in 1979 in Kiel) studied from 1999 - 2004 at the Ecole Superieure des Beaux Arts in Paris, graduating with a diploma in 2004. In 2002, she won an Erasmus fellowship for Stockholm. Her work has been shown in solo and group shows in Paris, Berlin und New York, and she appears in live painting and drawing performances in plays by the director Thomas Ostermeier at Berlin's Schaubühne.