

Elisabeth Wild

June 2 –
Sep 11, 2022

MEDIA ORIENTATION
May 31, 2022, 11 am

OPENING DAY
June 2, 2022, 11 am to 8 pm

curated by Sabine Schaschl and Eliza Lips

Museum Haus Konstruktiv presents the largest solo exhibition on the work of Elisabeth Wild (1922 Vienna, AT – 2020 Panajachel, GT) presented in a Swiss museum. It features around 180 small-format collages that the artist created from the turn of the millennium until shortly before her death, using elements from glossy magazines.

Over here, a concrete structure and inserted graphic color fields in blue and violet jointly generate an interesting interplay of two-dimensionality and depth effect; over there, an image of a sunset rotated by 90 degrees combines with primarily dark-red, dark-green and black semicircles, along with a dimly glowing dome shape, to produce a dream-like futuristic scene. These and many other compositions are presented on the fifth floor at Museum Haus Konstruktiv, where the wealth of variety that Elisabeth Wild achieved in her works on paper unfolds most impressively.

Wild turned to the medium of collage in the last two decades of her long and eventful life. Born to a Catholic mother and Jewish father in Vienna, she fled the Nazis in 1938 with her parents, who took her to Buenos Aires, where she enrolled in a painting course. To make a living, Wild worked as a textile designer – one of many (gainful) creative occupations she would pursue throughout her life. In 1962, Argentina's right-wing conservative politics prompted her to return to Europe with her husband August Wild, a Swiss textile entrepreneur, and daughter Vivian. After arriving in Basel, she established what would become a well-known antique store, which she ran until the late 1990s. At an advanced age, Wild made Latin America her main place of residence once again: In 1996, she started gradually moving to Panajachel, Guatemala. In the central highlands, near Lago de Atitlán, she lived from 2007 to 2020 with her daughter Vivian Suter on a former coffee plantation, where the latter still works as an artist.

Amid this region's lush vegetation, at a desk in the studio that was set up for her there, Wild created a collage almost every day. She took the required material from magazines devoted to fashion, art and architecture. The format depended on whatever motif the artist chose as the background image and carrier of the respective collage. With scissors, glue and a magnifying glass, as well as a keen sense of color, form and composition, Wild spent almost twenty years creating enigmatic visual worlds, which she referred to as *Fantasías* but gave no individual titles. Wild often positioned the delicate paper cutouts symmetrically in the image, interleaving them to create dense micro-worlds shifting between reality and illusion, in which seemingly surreal components appear just as often as geometric shapes, architectural elements, and excerpts from logos or other delightful

finds; an intuitive and playful remix of (or foray through) stylistic devices from 20th-century art history and cultural history.

For a long time, Elisabeth Wild's artistic oeuvre went unnoticed. She began to receive greater attention in the mid-2010s, thanks in particular to her daughter, within whose highly acclaimed solo shows, Wild was always able to fill one room with her works. In 2017, with her participation in *documenta 14* in Kassel and Athens, she was able to fully establish herself as an artist. Museum Haus Konstruktiv is now presenting the first comprehensive selection of her works to be seen in a solo museum exhibition. In keeping with the artist's sense of play, this exhibition is arranged neither chronologically nor thematically, but freely put together. As engaging with the pieces involves oscillating between the distinctiveness and preciousness of the individual sheet, and the overflowing abundance that characterizes this body of work, the manner of presentation also adopts a kind of pendular motion: In all four exhibition spaces, one or two solitary pieces stand opposite a multitude of works. Depending on the space, these are hung according to different principles, offering various ways of reading Wild's works in relation to one another. This leaves room for making individual discoveries – much like rummaging through one of the antique chests in which Wild stored her collages.

The collages are complemented by the video piece *Elisabeth's Garden* (2020) by Raúl Itamar Lima. This shows excerpts from Super-8 footage filmed by Wild in the 1990s in her Bernese Oberland house, where she lived before moving to Guatemala.

MEDIATION PROGRAM

July 6, 6.15 pm

CURATOR'S TOUR

Guided tour (in German) of the current exhibitions with Evelyne Bucher.

August 24, 6.15 pm

CURATOR'S TOUR

Guided tour (in German) of the current exhibitions with Eliza Lips.

PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS take place on Wednesdays at 6.15 pm and on Sundays at 11.45 am. Information on further events and on our digital mediation program can be found at hauskonstruktiv.ch.

We appreciate your interest and your visit!

We would like to thank the galleries Karma International and Proyectos Ultravioleta as well as Vivian Suter, who contributed significantly to the realization of the exhibition.

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