

KUNST MERAN

im Haus der Sparkasse

MERANO ARTE

edificio Cassa di Risparmio

Press release:

Elisabeth Hölzl

Gina Klaber Thusek

Lichtpausen, lückenhaft

Kunst Meran Merano Arte: 5 March to 5 June 2022

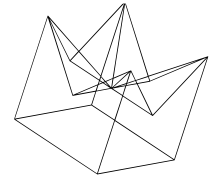
Curator: Ursula Schnitzer

***Lichtpausen, lückenhaft* [Light breaks, intermittently] is an exhibition that presents two artists – Gina Klaber Thusek (1900-1983) and Elisabeth Hölzl (1962) – in interlocking retrospectives.**

The two met in Meran in the early 1970s: Thusek was at the time a mature artist who had been through two world wars, been confined to Meran and spent 16 years as a stateless person. Hölzl was a young girl, just at the beginning of her artistic career. Although the two artists belonged to different generations and were shaped by utterly different life circumstances, there exists a surprisingly large number of references between their works.

Their first encounter in 1973 has now – almost 50 years later – led to a new encounter: Gina Thusek's estate held in the archives of Meran's Palais Mamming, has become a moment of remembrance and an inspiration for Elisabeth Hölzl, whose multifaceted works, together with Thusek's oeuvre, reveal a new, expansive dimension in this exhibition. The show thus goes beyond that of a double exhibition to become, through the interweaving of the works of both artists, a new whole.

Lichtpausen, lückenhaft tells of the richly layered points of contact between the two: Thusek's work, gradually brought into the light, has in recent months prompted Elisabeth Hölzl to see some of her own work anew, to sift through her early work and permit new works to enter into dialogue with those of Thusek. The individual sections of the exhibition accordingly trace themes and life situations that have played an important role in the work of both artists. Love, longing, desire; photography as a narrative method and an expression of introspection; new paths in sculpture or a strong affinity with textiles – these are just some of the facets shown.



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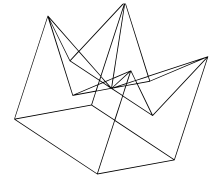
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While it was Ursula Schnitzer's art historical research and archival work on Gina Klaber Thusek that gave rise to the idea for this project over the past few years, Hölzl's intensive examination of the legacy of her drawing teacher subsequently led to an even stronger interaction between the two oeuvres. Situational arrangements with selected works, new installations and spaces as an intimate encounter between the two women all form an exhibition that seems underpinned by a special artistic closeness.

Accompanying the exhibition is a notebook in the form of a bibliophile publication. Conceived as an additional work by Elisabeth Hölzl and based upon Gina Thusek's photos and diaries (a central aspect of the exhibition), blank pages between the illustrations invite the reader to add notes, sketches and jottings. A glossary by the Berlin publicist and curator Anne Brannys also introduces certain terms that condense essential themes of the exhibition project into existential experiences. One example is the word "*Nachlassung*" ("bequeathment"): *How do we feel when an estate is left to us? This last address is much more than an adieu: it is an à toi. The invitation to confrontation of whatever kind (even non-confrontation is a decision that costs a certain effort), at the same time withdrawing from confrontation with one another, is a sign of trust, a gift and yet an imposition* (Anne Brannys for *Lichtpausen, lückenhaft*, 2022).

Gina (Regina) Klaber Thusek was born in 1900 in Moravia, then a part of the Habsburg Empire. She spent her childhood first in Römerstadt (now Rýmařov) and then Vienna, where she received a thorough artistic training at the Graphical Education Institute: even at that time her extraordinary artistic talent had become evident in her many drawings after nature. In 1921 Gina Klaber married Oskar Thusek (1893-1973) and moved with him to Teplitz-Schönau (now Teplice). In 1936, Klaber Thusek moved to London to work in the fashion industry as a knitwear designer. Her husband found employment in Italy. While staying in Italy in 1939 the couple were made stateless, as a result of which Klaber Thusek was confined to Meran until 1946, after the war had ended. In 1955, after 16 years of statelessness, the couple were finally granted Italian citizenship. Klaber Thusek took advantage of her now-regular status and enrolled for further studies in sculpture, first in Florence, then at the Brera Academy in Milan with Marino Marini. Despite her great restlessness and frequent travels, she continued to reside in Meran until her death on 11 April 1983.

Klaber Thusek donated her estate to Meran's Municipal Museum. Its vast scope and multi-layered content together provide an extraordinarily detailed insight into her life and work.



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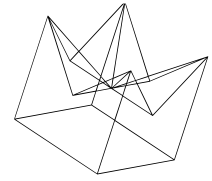
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Klaber Thusek's oeuvre is characterised by its consistent development, from an original commitment to naturalism through an increasing abstraction into various avant-garde forms of expression. As an artist, she continued to create sculptures, drawings, assemblages as well as fashion and jewellery designs into her old age. Characteristic of her work are an urge to develop further, which endured well into her later years, combined with a trained eye that she kept fixed on the international art scene. Klaber Thusek has so far largely been denied the local and international appreciation that is her due, a fate shared with numerous female artists of her generation.

Elisabeth Hölzl was born in Meran in 1962 and grew up in a musical, culturally open-minded family. On completion of her education at the Classical High School in Meran, she first studied art history for a year in Innsbruck and then sculpture at the *Accademia di Belle Arti* in Bologna, followed by a year spent training in ceramics in Faenza. In subsequent years she lived near Milan before returning to Meran in 1991, where she lives and works today.

Elisabeth Hölzl entered the public eye in the 1990s with her minimalist sculptures and installations. In the following years she increasingly detached herself from materials in her works and turned to elements such as glass and light: the focus was no longer on the material or the volume, but rather on what makes it visible – the light. Photography, which has accompanied her work since its beginnings, has in recent years become her preferred means of expression. Her photographic projects, often set over longer time periods, are primarily concerned with situations of upheaval that create gaps in architectural and social terms. In this way, photographic works such as *Roma Camp Bozen* (2004/05), *Hotel Bristol* (2008), *Libera Viva* (2012), *Absolute Eye* (2016) and *Sommer im Winter* (2019) have been created in recent years. Her work is documented in numerous exhibitions and publications, both in Italy and further afield. The exhibition *Lichtpausen, lückenhaft* is Hölzl's first retrospective and, for her sixtieth birthday, provides the first comprehensive overview of her work. (<https://www.elisabethhoelzl.com>)



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Curator: Ursula Schnitzer

Artists: Elisabeth Hölzl, Gina Klaber Thusek

Exhibition design: Elisabeth Hölzl, Ursula Schnitzer

Graphic design: Elisabeth Hölzl

Duration of exhibition: 05.03. – 05.06.2022

Location: Kunst Meran Merano Arte | Via Portici 163, 39012 Meran

Opening times: Tuesday - Saturday: 10am – 6pm / Sundays and public holidays: 11am – 6pm

Info: info@kunstmeranoarte.org | www.kunstmeranoarte.org

Press contact (German): Ursula Schnitzer | schnitzer@kunstmeranoarte.org | Tel. + 39 0473 212643

Press contact (Italian): Irene Guzman | press@kunstmeranoarte.org | Tel. + 39 349 1250956

