



Vienna, 7 December 2020

Belvedere 21

Arsenalstraße 1
1030 Vienna

Opening hours:

Tue to Sun 11 am – 6 pm
Closed Mondays except on public holidays
Closed on 24 December 2020

Press downloads:

belvedere.at/presse21

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Maja Vukoje, SPA 3, 2020
Courtesy Maja Vukoje, Photo © Roland Krauss © Bildrecht, Vienna

MAJA VUKOJE

ON THE EDGE

8 December 2020 - 23 May 2021

Maja Vukoje's work interweaves topics related to our globalized world with current discourses in painting. For this exhibition—her most comprehensive solo show to date—the artist has created a site-specific installation in the Belvedere 21 pavilion.

"Maja Vukoje has developed a distinctive artistic language across various bodies of work. Her paintings reflect the sense and the sensuality of this medium, and are simultaneously alluring and challenging," said CEO Stella Rollig.

Maja Vukoje examines the mingling and merging of elements from different cultures in various ways. The artist engages with questions like: What do materials such as burlap and products like sugar, coffee, and cocoa tell us about economics and power in a globalized world? How does this relate to modernist abstract painting's claim to autonomy? And what approaches are now being pursued by painting in order to reflect itself, its history, and its multiple interrelationships?

In her exhibition, tropical fruits and other trade goods with colonial associations encounter symbols of our digitized daily lives and the surveillance of our bodies, while motifs from popular culture meet iconic

works of abstract painting. Through her motifs, her unusual materials and artistic processes, the artist emphasizes the crossing of media boundaries. She has used rough and unprimed burlap as her supports since 2014. Maja Vukoje explores the qualities of materials and different levels of meaning by experimenting with the technical processes of painting. In one work series she uses sugar, coffee, or cocoa both as a subject and a material in the painting.

One striking body of works shows half-peeled fruit or vegetables, like an avocado, orange or sweet potato, depicted with a strong sense of three-dimensional illusionism. These monumental compositions that focus on an individual object call to mind a portrait. Vukoje's gestural application and removal of paint draw out the tactile qualities of the fruits' surfaces, peel, and flesh.

In a series of large-scale painted collages, motifs from different eras and cultures encounter objects from the present day: Neolithic masks meet underwear and a flipflop, or sanitary products like toilet paper and disinfectant—items charged with meaning in the current pandemic. As everyday things they tell of social coexistence and also of the relations and dependencies between humanity and nature, as well as humanity and technology.

The painter Josef Albers's iconic series *Homage to the Square* is an important reference for Maja Vukoje. This body of work explores how the effect of pure colors depends on their combinations and relative proportions within the same composition of a gradually enlarging sequence of squares. Vukoje alludes to this composition not only in the previously mentioned works that use sugar, coffee, and cocoa as paint but also in her site-specific intervention for the exhibition at the Belvedere 21 called *Nach Albers (After Albers)*. Located on the upper floor of the Karl Schwanzer Pavilion—a classic example of Austrian postwar modernism—it comprises industrially dyed panels of burlap in a specific arrangement within the structure of the inner façade. The result is a vibrant interplay of light and shadow, color and materiality that focuses our gaze on the qualities of this open-plan space. From the Arsenalstrasse and the Schweizergarten, passersby can see the installation when it gets dark, transforming it into a signal to the world outside.

"Maja Vukoje's paintings are colorful, beguiling, sometimes bewildering, they quote things we know from our everyday lives or from the art museum, they challenge our perception but also our attitudes. Above all, they reveal her virtuosity as a painter who reflects on and experimentally probes the possibilities of what a painting can be today," said curator Luisa Ziaja.

Featuring over one hundred works, the exhibition presents the most comprehensive insight into the artist's work to date. The hanging is not arranged by chronology or theme but makes associations by interweaving bodies of work from the last decade with her most recent art.

In 2020 Maja Vukoje was awarded the City of Vienna's Prize for Fine Art.

BIOGRAPHY

Maja Vukoje was born in Düsseldorf in 1969, grew up in Belgrade and has lived in Vienna since 1988. She studied painting with Maria Lassnig and Christian Ludwig Attersee at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. Since the 1990s, her works have been recognized with many stipends and prizes including: Österreichisches Staatsstipendium für bildende Kunst (1999), Prize for young European painters, Premio del Golfo, La Spezia (2000), Georg Eisler-Preis der Bank Austria Creditanstalt (2004), outstanding artist award (2015), International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP) New York (sponsored by the Austrian Federal Chancellery; 2019), Preis der Stadt Wien für bildende Kunst (2020). She has been on the board of the Vienna Secession since 2013.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition title	<i>Maja Vukoje. On the Edge</i>
Curator	Luisa Ziaja
Curatorial Assistance	Véronique Abpurg
Exhibition Management	Agathe Boruszczak
Works	102
Dates	8 December 2020 to 23 May 2021
Location	Belvedere 21 Arsenalstraße 1, 1030 Vienna
Opening hours	Tuesday to Sunday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Mondays except on public holidays Closed on 24 December 2020
Tickets	Regular 8 € Discounted 6 € Annual pass Belvedere 39 € Children and youth up to 19 free
Web	belvedere.at/en facebook.com/belvedere21 twitter.com/belvedere21 instagram.com/belvedere21wien #MajaVukoje

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