

Press release of 10 May 2013

Katharina Shepherd: «Bamboo and Cherry Blossom»

Art and spiritual path – ink painting can be both at the same time. Katharina Shepherd's images of flowers, blossom and plants mirror the care, devotion and calmness that shape her painting. Her works open one's eyes to the beauty, richness and grandeur of the everyday.

In 1982 the Swiss artist Katharina Shepherd-Kobel (*1952) travelled to Japan to train in Zen meditation. From the beginning she was also taught ink painting and calligraphy, and painting became her way of capturing the essence of things and applying this artistically. She has practised and taught both ink painting and Zen meditation since returning to Switzerland in 1991.

At first sight, Shepherd's black and white images of bamboo, cherry blossom, orchids and blackberries appear as simple as the so-called four treasures she requires to paint – ink, inkstone, brush and paper. However, the ability to not only recognise but also convey the essence of each individual plant requires many years of tireless practise and undivided commitment. The way to this presence in the here and now that the artist takes with her pictures is based on harmony, respect, serenity and calmness.

Shepherd's ink paintings aim not to show the outward appearance of things in the most realistic way possible, but rather their inner nature. Her works are reduced to the essential, the empty space within an image being as important as that which is portrayed. The ink, in all shades from light grey to deepest black, is accentuated only by the red of the artist's seal and the subtle colour tones of the mount, each mount being individually matched to its respective image in Japan. A number of the plants painted by Shepherd, such as bamboos or orchids, are traditional subjects of East Asian art and richly symbolic. However, Shepherd also applies herself with dedication, pleasure, astonishment and interest to inconspicuous plants, such as grasses or cereals. Each work touches and enriches equally through the presence, spiritedness and beauty of that which is portrayed.

You and your friends are warmly invited to the exhibition preview on Thursday 23 May 2013, from 17.00 to 20.00. Katharina Shepherd will be present.

The exhibition «Bamboo and Cherry Blossom» runs from 24 May 2013 to 13 July 2013.

On Thursday 13 June at 18.30 the artist will provide a tour of the exhibition, with drinks to follow. Registration would be appreciated.

Opening hours: Wednesday to Friday 12.00 to 18.00, Saturday 11.00 to 15.00, or by appointment.

Further information available from:

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Katharina Shepherd

Education

1982 – 1991 Residency in Japan
Training in Zen, traditional ink painting and calligraphy
Japanese language studies (1983 – 1985)

Selected exhibitions

2012 «Rollbilder und Bildrollen», shop window contrast, Bern
2010 Hanging scrolls and other ink paintings, La chapelle nouvel, Biel
2009 «Wie Zen schmeckt», exhibition of illustrations from the eponymous book, Benediktushof, Holzkirchen near Würzburg
2007 «Tuschebilder», bg25 – Raum für Soziokultur, Bern
«Bambus und Kirschblüten», Galerie Rüttihubelbad, Walkringen
2006 «Bambus, Orchideen, Pflaumenblüten, Chrysanthemen», Benediktushof, Holzkirchen near Würzburg
«Zen in der Kunst der Tuschmalerei», author's reading and exhibition from the first edition of the eponymous book, Bookshop Stauffacher, Bern

Publications

Katharina Shepherd-Kobel, *Handbuch der fernöstlichen Tuschmalerei*, Bielefeld 2006
Katharina Shepherd-Kobel, *Zen in der Kunst der Tuschmalerei*, Bielefeld 2005

Book illustrations

Thich Nhat Hanh, *Nenne mich bei meinem wahren Namen*, Munich 2010
Doris Zöls, Christof Zirkelbach, *Wie Zen schmeckt*, Munich 2009
Willigis Jäger, *Westöstliche Weisheit*, Bielefeld 2007
Willigis Jäger, *Das Leben endet nie*, Freiburg 2005

Selected works

1. Katharina Shepherd, *Bamboo*, 2012, hanging scroll, ink on paper, 135 x 34.5 cm, including brocade mounting 198 x 46.5 cm.
2. Katharina Shepherd, *Cherry Blossom*, 2010, hanging scroll, ink on paper, 91 x 30 cm, including brocade mounting 160 x 41 cm.
3. Katharina Shepherd, *Orchid with Rock*, 2011, hanging scroll, ink on paper, 23.5 x 33 cm, including brocade mounting 114 x 46 cm.
4. Katharina Shepherd, *Blackberry Stems*, 2011, hanging scroll, ink on paper, 137 x 35.5 cm, including brocade mounting 198 x 46.5 cm.