

Cabinet: **Cécile Wick. In the Near Distance**

The Swiss artist Cécile Wick is showing current works, mainly from the past three years, in the Cabinet of the Museum Franz Gertsch. A wanderer between the realms of photography, painting, drawing, and printmaking, she creates works on paper that sound out the possibilities of the media she uses.

Not long after her beginnings as a performance artist, Cécile Wick went on to produce images with a video camera. In 1986 she started experimenting with the camera obscura method and took pictures with pinhole cameras ranging from small to large, and from simple to complex. She also used reflex cameras and polaroid cameras before moving on to early digital technology in 1996. Today she works with a digital camera and her mobile phone. The classic realisation of photographs on photopaper or as C prints holds little fascination for the artist. After digitally editing her images – a process that brings a lot of creative freedom to her handling of colour, contrast, grain, resolution, and the controlled application of soft focus – she uses a plotter or an inkjet printer to impress her photographs on different types of paper she has experimented with over the years, such as Japanese paper or other kinds of artistic paper. In 1996 Cécile Wick also created her first heliogravures, as well as some lithographs in

collaboration with Michèle Dillier and Arno Hassler at the Atelier de Gravure in Moutier. In 2006 the artist embarked on intensive exploration of Japanese ink drawing and the Zen tradition, which led her to use the paintbrush to reduce motifs to lines, patches, and empty space. Since then, her drawings and photographs have evolved in tandem.

For Cécile Wick, the camera is the instrument par excellence when it comes to producing images. It is the picture as an intrinsic construction of reality, not the photograph as a representation of reality that interests her. She uses print media to construct sensual surfaces and textures, to create a varied scale of colours, greys, and whites, as well as deep shades of black. Her exploration of the photo with its glossy surface and alleged objectivity along with the liberal application of diverse media and digital technologies result in an approximation of painting.

Her many travels and walks provide the artist with motifs, that is, with landscapes: mountains, islands, oceans, forests, water- and ice-falls, glaciers, snow, skies, clouds, mist, stones, twigs, leaves, blossoms. In her works, Wick engages in a dialogue with the history of the landscape, both in Western and in Far Eastern art, however, without the aim of

depicting specific places – the place is merely a prompt for a new picture.

These works have a poetic and contemplative appeal. The viewing experience is akin to an encounter with pristine nature, words like beauty and sublimity come to mind. Light and shadow, blossoming and wilting, the circle of life and death are the main themes. Conveyed by the expanse and emptiness, the tranquillity and timelessness in these naturescapes, is a sense of condensed temporality, a merging of present, past, and future.

The exhibition comprises monotypes, lithographs, pigment prints, and drawings the artist created between 2012 and 2026. In 2026, a collaboration with the lithographic printing house Wolfensberger in Zurich yielded several works for which Cécile Wick tried out a new technique by combining monotyping and photography. The resulting unique pieces blend photography and painterly structures to create a pictorial whole that oscillates between representation and atmospheric composition. In **“Mond” [Moon]** drop-like patterns become condensation on an imaginary glass pane. **“Rausch” [Intoxication]** with its over-dimensional and zoomed in spherical flowerheads evokes psychoactive mushrooms and optical hallucinations. The chandelier in **“Leuchter” [Chandelier]** is subjected to a

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metamorphosis: suspended from a stuccoed ceiling, it takes on the appearance of a white flower against a red backdrop in the print.

To become a picture, every subject must undergo a transformation, such as the all but withered lilies in the large-format lithograph **“Ohne Titel” [Untitled] (2012)**. The leaves and blossoms in the fragmented four-part print are virtually transparent – as though see-through, as though on the verge of disappearing.

The so-called “Silberdrucke” [Silver Prints] Cécile Wick had transferred onto black paper with silver ink at the Printmaking Atelier / Gallery Tom Blaess in Bern in 2025 are also lithographs. Delicate flowering branches, as well as magnificent rose and peony blossoms are the themes. While works such as the paradoxically titled **“Durchblick” [Perspective]** feature all-over structures composed of botanical elements, the artist brings us very close to the blossom in **“peonia” [Peony]**. In **“silver-roses”** the attentive viewer will not only spot different types of roses, but also their leaves and the ground in which they are rooted.

For her medium-sized Gum Prints, a form of paper lithography involving gum arabic, Cécile Wick chose black ink. The themes include forest landscapes with the bare trunks of

firtrees, riverscapes, both flowing and frozen waterfalls, as well as close-ups of flowers and other plants. While the printing technique gives the surface a special texture, the black ink produces a lively tonality in works such as **“misterioso”** or **“radioso” (both 2025)**.

The artist’s large-format coloured pigment prints are based on polaroids and have poetic titles. The landscape motifs seem faraway and slightly blurred, as though viewed from a moving vehicle. In **“Grosses Vergessen” [Great Oblivion] (2025)**, a large hewn rock formation seems to appear in the background of the prairie landscape, while **“leere tage” [Empty Days] (2025)** brings us close to the passing vegetation: the more or less central horizon halves the landscape format, thus creating an equal balance between ground and sky. Cloud formations define the atmospheric skies above the vivid landscapes. By contrast, the stalks in **“Sommerstille” [Summer Quite] (2025)** seem almost palpable.

Parallel to her photographic and graphic works, Cécile Wick also created **ink drawings on Japanese paper**. While they all have the same format, she worked with different brushes, quills, and pens. Her creative range unites the theme of nature: the dots and circles, curving lines, short and long strokes become water droplets, stalks and stems, ears,

buds, blossoms, flowers, webs, branches, trunks, grass and forest landscapes, moon and sun, clouds and skies.

The show was curated by Anna Wesle in collaboration with the artist.

The catalogue published by Modo Press in Frankfurt a. M. is available in the museum shop and online.

The artist’s special thanks go to Printmaking Atelier / Gallery Tom Blaess, Bern and Steindruckerei Wolfensberger AG, Zurich.

(text: Anna Wesle, translation: Katherine Lewald)

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BIOGRAPHY

Born 1954 in Muri, Canton of Aargau (CH).
Lives and works in Zurich (CH).

EDUCATION

Various work grants, lecture assignments and scholarships enabled extended study periods in New York, Provincetown, Bucharest, Paris, Rome, Venice, Cairo and Berlin.

- 1990–2015 Lecturer, later Professor of Photography at the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK)
- 1997–2010 Business of F.I.R.M.A with the artist Peter Radelfinger. F.I.R.M.A stands for art and communication and has primarily initiated Art-and-Building projects.
- 1996–97 Master in Fine Arts, University of California, Davis, CA
- 1986–89 Stay in the USA
- 1974–78 Study of art history and German language and literature at the University of Zurich, and study of theatre sciences at the Université Paris VIII, Vincennes
- 1974 Diploma in Primary Education

AWARDS AND GRANTS

- 2023 Studio grant of the Forberg Foundation in Venice
- 2019 Art Prize Zollikon 2019
- 2014 Zuger Kulturstiftung Landis & Gyr, Zug, Scholarship Bukarest
- 2010 Zuger Kulturstiftung Landis & Gyr, Zug, Studio grant Berlin

- 2006 Die schönsten Schweizer Bücher, Prize
- 2003 Art Prize of the Canton of Zurich
- 1989 Thurgauische Kunstgesellschaft, Adolf Dietrich-Research Prize
- 1987 Studio grant Provincetown, MA
- 1986 PS1 Foundation Scholarship, Studio New York
- 1982/83/84 Work grant, Canton of Zurich

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 „Cécile Wick. In naher Ferne“, Museum Franz Gertsch, Burgdorf (CH)
- „Cécile Wick. Garten, garden, giardino“, Villa Garbald, Castasegna (CH)
- 2025 „Cécile Wick. Mondgesang“, Galerie Tom Blaess, Bern (CH)
- 2022 „bis-da-hin – Cécile Wick“, Galerie am Platz, Eglisau (CH)
- 2019 „Cécile Wick“, Galerie Marianne Grob, Basel (CH)
- 2018 „Cécile Wick. SUB ROSA. Druckgrafik und Zeichnungen“, Kunsthaus Grenchen, Grenchen (CH)
- 2014 „Cécile Wick“, Kunstmuseum Bern @PROGR, Bern (CH)
- 2013 „Cécile Wick – Canto oscuro“, kunst(Zeug)Haus, Rapperswil-Jona (CH)
- „Cécile Wick“, Galerie Bernard Jordan, Zürich (CH)
- 2011 „Cécile Wick. Photographien und Zeichnungen“, Galerie Walter Keller, Zürich (CH)

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 Lechbinska Gallery, Kif SEOUL, Seoul (KOR)
- 2020 „Interieur – Exterieur. Die KWS-Sammlung zu Gast“, Museum Franz Gertsch, Burgdorf (CH)

- 2013 „Héliogravures“, Centre de la Gravure et de l'Image imprimée, La Louvière (BE)
- „Natur? Schweizer Fotografie 1870 bis heute“, Kunsthalle Palazzo Liestal, Liestal (CH)
- 2010 „Schweiz ohne Schweiz. Alpenlose Landschaften“, Museum zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen (CH)
- 2009 „Notturmo / Bilder der Nacht“, Kunsthaus Olten, Olten (CH)
- 2008 „Heliogravur“, Photoforum Centre PasquArt, Biel/Bienne (CH)
- „Präzision und Wahnsinn. Positionen in der Schweizer Kunst“, Museum Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg (DE)

MONOGRAPHS AND ARTIST'S BOOKS

- 2013 „Cécile Wick. canto oscuro“, Edition Thomi Wolfensberger & Cécile Wick, Zürich 2013
- 2011 „Cécile Wick. Colored waters“, mit Texten von Nadine Olonetzky & Martin Jaeggi, Zürich 2011
- 2006 „Cécile Wick. Weltgesichte / Visions du monde“, mit Texten von Nadine Olonetzky, Claudine Metzger und Matthias Frehner, hrsg. von Kunstmuseum Bern, Bern 2006
- „Nachtstücke“, Text von Nadine Olonetzky, Bilder von Cécile Wick, Nürnberg 2006
- 2005 „Vor dem Hintergrund – F.I.R.M.A stellt aus“, Cécile Wick und Peter Radelfinger, Interview André Behr, Haus der Kunst St. Josef, Solothurn
- „Weg – Away“, mit 21 Heliogravuren und Texten von Cécile Wick, Bern 2005

More information:
www.cecilewick.kleio.com

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