

Vivian Suter
Tintin Nina Disco

kaufmann repetto is pleased to announce Vivian Suter's exhibition *Tintin Nina Disco*, including more than fifty large scale works resulting from the artist's decades-long research immersed in the lush Guatemalan rainforest. This series of canvases epitomizes Suter's creative alliance with the vicissitudes of terrain and weather, introducing us to the incessant rhapsody of nature and its deep connection with the artist's practice. This resonates also in the fluid, non-hierarchical presentation of the works, often overlapping, suspended and swaying in the space, absorbed in the ecosystem and spirit of the artist's surroundings.

Vivian Suter was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1949, from Austrian migrants. When the government threatened to take over their business in the sixties, the family moved to Basel, Switzerland, where Vivian Suter studied before departing on a long series of journeys through Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. During her travels she made collages, drawings, sculptures and took photographs along the way, and since her early works, one could notice how rooted the idea of pilgrimage, movement and change was in her practice. As soon as her career began to take off she moved once again, far from the spotlight of the European art scene.

Vivian Suter has been living in a house she built on a former coffee plantation, near the lake on the slopes of Panajachel, Guatemala, since the eighties. Her art, which has always breathed and embodied the contexts in which she worked, was formed as an act of mapping, marking and naming her surroundings. The tropical rainforest is, in fact, an active character in the plethora of conditions that contribute to the genesis of the artwork. The canvases carry traces of their environment: rain water and mud stains, scratches from the tree branches, and even some paw prints of Tintin, Nina or Disco, the beloved dogs that roam in Suter's open air studio.

The rich colors that are abstractly painted on the canvases recall pristine water bodies, butterfly patterns, foggy sunlight. Vivian Suter's pictorial intervention always reveals a beautiful collaboration with the context she lives in, and her artworks aim to transform the environment of every exhibition space they inhabit. The surface of the painting serves as a testimony for nature's morphing - the canvas is a precarious living material, and, other than representing nature, the artist witnesses its gradual decay and its vibrant regeneration. This approach towards the materiality of the unframed canvas imposes a shift in appreciation for the object's preciousness.

Adam Szymczyk, who included Suter in both his Athens and Kassel setting for Documenta 14, writes about the artist's radical perspective in his essay *Against the Evil Eye*:

Thus, nature - itself the lure for and source of colonialism, its raw material extracted by both the culture and industry of colonizers - serves as a respectful, protective cover that prevents looting and looking and alleviates the effects of the "evil eye" elsewhere called the colonial gaze.¹

It seems like whenever Suter's works are shown in an exhibition space, the circular process of the painting's coming into being briefly interrupts, conceding a moment of gratitude and awe for nature's unstoppable, never-ending flow, as the object's final purpose is to be swallowed back into the elements that made it.

Vivian Suter (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1949) studied painting at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Basel. Shortly after her first group exhibition at Kunsthalle Basel in 1981, she left Europe for Guatemala where she has lived since. Some of Vivian Suter's solo exhibitions include: *Secession*, Vienna; *GAMEC*, Bergamo (2023); *Kunstmuseum Basel*; *Vleeshal*, Middelburg (2022); *Kunstmuseum Luzern*, *Museo Reina Sofía Madrid* (2021); *Camden Arts Centre*, London (2020); *ICA*, Boston; *Tate Liverpool*; *Mudam Luxembourg* (2019); *The Power Plant*, Toronto; *Art Institute of Chicago* (2018); *Jewish Museum*, New York (2017); *Kunsthalle Basel* (2014), among others. Suter also took part in prestigious group exhibitions, including: *14th Gwangju Biennale* (2023); *Guggenheim*, New York (2022); *Kunsthaus Zürich* (2021); *High Line*, New York (2019); *Documenta 14*, Athens and Kassel (2017), among others.

¹ Adam Szymczyk, *Against the Evil Eye: Vivian Suter's Intrepid Painting in Vivian Suter, The Power Plant Toronto*, Hatje Cantz Verlag, Berlin, 2019