

Anna Stangl

*„She had uncovered her upper body, and on her amber-colored right breast there was a large blue flower“*  
Boris Vian, „El' Ecume des Jours“

Woman, representation of the female, her own identity and its fragility in the interplay of the erotic and wounding, uplifting and humiliating forces of an outside world perceived as Other, these are Anna Stangl's themes. Her women and girl-like beings isolate themselves in their dreams and ideas, in the way they are wrapped up in themselves sleeping, in affectionate embrace, in the concentration on their own bodies as in ovules that become their aura, in which they can move freely, develop, in which they may simply exist as though unseen.

Chloé in Boris Vian's story is the same kind of female creature, catching a deadly illness in her surreal context: she dies of a growth that she nourishes in her breast, a water-lily. The woman thus becomes a synonym for growth, for becoming, the epitome of what is vegetable and ornamental, like what is represented by flowers, blossoms, growth. Yet jeopardy is always part of this too, the danger of becoming extinct and fading away to the point of death.

In their contours and embodiment, Anna Stangl's women are indeterminate and transparent beings. They are changeable, flexible in their representation and in their transparency. In newer works they enter into new, multiple forms of existence, and the large heads that appear now (and which are not necessarily to be regarded as gender-specific) are superimposed on one another in simultaneous presences. The artist never wants to have anything fully determined, completely formulated, but rather to leave open to herself and her figurations the possibility of something ambiguous in a closed system. Body and space enter into an intensive and intimate interplay and allow themselves superimpositions and appropriations to the point of dissolution of the contours.

Where the flower lies on Cloe's breast in Boris Vian's story, in Anna Stangl's small picture icons it intervenes in the body and grows together with it into an open system, in which materiality and decor, pattern and background, representation and intention become a poetic unit.

Dr. Margit Zuckriegl, 2000

curator of the Museum Rupertinum, Salzburg and director of the Austrian Fotogalerie