

Press Release

**Simone Fattal
Sitter**

**2 February – 16 March 2024
Opening 1 February, 6 – 8 pm**

In September 2023, Simone Fattal spent a two-week long residency at St. Gallen's reputable art manufactory Sitterwerk. During this time, she created a significant number of ceramic and bronze sculptures for her upcoming solo show at the Louvre in Paris, which will take place in April 2024. Adjoining the huge industrial hall which was her allotted studio for the residency, Fattal had a plain yet comfortable room where she slept. And because there aren't too many distractions in the remote area where Sitterwerk is located Fattal would use the evening hours, after the art production shut down, to make even more art.

During her stay, she created two large scale paintings on canvas, entitled *Sitter I* and *Sitter II*. Like so often in the past, these works depict the view that presents itself right in front of her studio. In this case, it was the river "Sitter" which peacefully flows alongside the vast property of Sitterwerk and was the inspiration for the name of the art manufactory, as well as the show at Karma International described in this text. The paintings are held in warm autumnal colors, a view right before sunset, where the water is already dark with cast shadows but the air is still vibrant in the evening sun. Along with these two works on canvas, Fattal also created a series of smaller works with similar themes: *Trees on Sitter* are variations of the subject, holding the same vibrating intensity and distinct color palette.

While these works were being created, the idea of a show came up: wouldn't it be a good idea to see this body of work together at the gallery, in its completion? Quickly the question arose what sculptures could be added to the show. The first thought was a large bronze mushroom, which had also been created at Sitterwerk at the same time. Fattal had introduced this shape to the public in a smaller form in her preceding solo show at Portikus in Frankfurt a few months earlier. But mushrooms had been in her repertoire years before. In fact, her late partner Etel Adnan had been so fascinated by them that she asked Fattal to make one thousand mushrooms in her lifetime. So, while Portikus was a start of this endeavour, it made sense to keep the pace going and create yet another version of the endearing fungus for this show.

Of course, Fattal's sculptural oeuvre is very much centered around the human figure, hence there was a need for the presence of a person. Again inspiration was drawn from Portikus: There, between trees and mushrooms, stood Humbaba, a gatekeeper and protector of the forest in Mesopotamian mythology. *Young Warrior* takes on a similar role for the show at the gallery. In Greek Mythology, warriors and heroes were men and women of special strength, courage and abilities, often of divine ancestry. Just like Humbaba, this standing figure can be understood as an archaic persona, using its strength to protect Mother Nature. Orbiting around each other, the swaying trees, the glistening Sitter, the enigmatic mushroom and the strong human figure build a balanced system, a perfect and enchanted capsule. Their interconnectedness makes us understand the beauty of our planet and the perfection of a calm moment in nature.

This year, Simone Fattal has been awarded the Berlin Grand Art Prize, as well as the Premio Internacional Julio González. She will have upcoming exhibitions at the Louvre, Paris (2024) and Secession, Vienna (2024). Recent solo and duo exhibitions include KINDL, Berlin (2023); Ocean Space, Venice (2023); Portikus, Frankfurt (2023); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2021); ICA Milano, Milan (2021); Bergen Kunsthall (2020); MoMA PS1, New York (2019); Musée Yves Saint Laurent, Marrakech (2018); and Sharjah Art Foundation (2016). Further, she has participated in group exhibitions such as the 59th Venice Biennale, The Milk of Dreams (2022); Gropius Bau, Berlin (2022); Aishti Foundation, Beirut (2022); 12th Berlin Biennale (2022); 16th Biennale de Lyon, France (2022); MAM - Musée d'art Moderne de Paris (2021); Punta Della Dogana, Pinault Collection, Venice (2019); New Museum, New York (2014); and Sharjah Biennial (2011).

Her work is in the collections of the Burger Collection, HK; Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Paris, FR; Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR; Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, US; Metropolitan Art Society, Beirut, LB; Mumok, Wien, AT; Musée d'Art Contemporain de la Haute-Vienne, Rochechouart, FR; Musée LAM, Lille, FR; Musée Yves Saint Laurent, Marrakech, MA; National Museum of Qatar, Doha, QA; Saradar Collection, Beirut, LB; Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah, AE; The Surssock Museum, Beirut, LB; Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Collection, Madrid, ES.

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