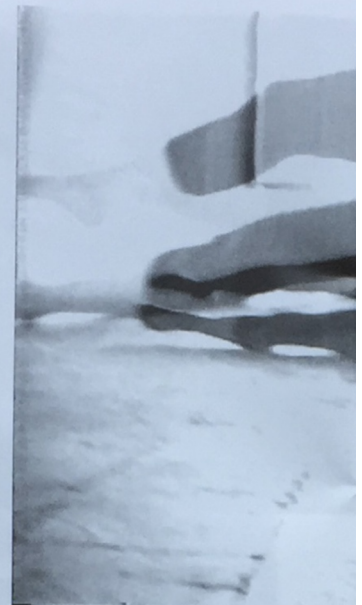


LETTER FROM ZURICH

Cinderellas

Anna Winteler's exhibition at the Kunsthau Baselland, on the fringes of Basel, is drawing to a close. Winteler, born in 1954, started employing video in the late 1970s and was amongst a group of artists that pioneered video and performance practice in the 1980s. She is a trained dancer but an autodidact artist, and her career in the art arena is impressive, including a solo exhibition at the Kunsthalle Basel in 1988, participation in group exhibitions at the Louisiana Museum, the Messepalast in Vienna and Museum Wiesbaden, not to mention the Swiss pavilion at the World Exhibition in Seville in 1992, curated by Harald Szeemann. In 1991, however, she made her final work, *Geriatrics IA - Song of Songs*, filmed in the hospital where she was studying to be a physiotherapist. In the manner of Charlotte Posenenske and other drop-out artists considered by Martin Herbert in *Tell Them I Said No* (Books AM407), and indeed Winteler's collaborator Christine Brodbeck, Winteler decided that she found



WOMEN WHO HAVE MANAGED TO SURVIVE INTO OLD AGE WHILE MAINTAINING A PRACTICE THAT WE CONTEMPORARY VIEWERS CAN READ WITHOUT STRAINING OURSELVES TOO MUCH ARE NOT ONLY AGREEABLE BUT EVEN IN SHORT SUPPLY – A WIN-WIN FOR THE MARKET.

more fulfilment working with bodies outside the art system. As she said baldly in an interview in 2004, 'art is no longer the best tool with which to position my values in society'. Nonetheless, the current revival of interest in Winteler's work has been enthusiastically met, both by her peers and by new audiences.

Among those peers from the Basel melting pot are Pipilotti Rist (Interview AM350), Rut Himmelsbach, Vivian Suter and Miriam Cahn, to mention just a few. Cahn was born five years before Winteler, and her own survey exhibition at the Kunstmuseum Bern will continue until mid June. Cahn's yowling, visceral painting – and her uncompromising stance – have long been beloved by many, but her work really gained international traction thanks to the prominent inclusion of a large number of canvases in Adam Szymczyk's Documenta in Kassel in 2017 (Reviews AM407). And the current Bern exhibition is one of a string of European showings in her 70th birthday year, at the Kunsthau Bregenz, Madrid's Reina Sofia, Munich's Haus der Kunst and the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, giving her work a

visibility and stature that firmly positions it in the contemporary canon.

At the Kunsthalle Bern, meanwhile, an exhibition by Isa Genzken (b1948) has just drawn to a close, as has Ida Applebroog's (b1929) exhibition at the Kunstmuseum Thun – the show was surprisingly (given that she is represented by Hauser & Wirth) her first solo exhibition in Switzerland. The Museum Langmatt, a historic house in Baden with a collection of predominantly Impressionist works that occasionally stages contemporary interventions, has just hosted a show of works by Margot Bergman (b1934), some of them now on view at the Museum Folkwang in Essen. Female artists beyond customary retirement age have thus become *salonfähig*, or socially acceptable. Where once Louise Bourgeois cut a relatively lone figure, audiences are now, happily, spoiled for choice.

To what do we owe the pleasure? Curators are championing these artists: Szymczyk notably exhibited not only Cahn but also, when at the Kunsthalle Basel, re-staged a key 1981 exhibition that included Cahn, Winteler, Suter

