

Nora Schattauer
Foreign Colours

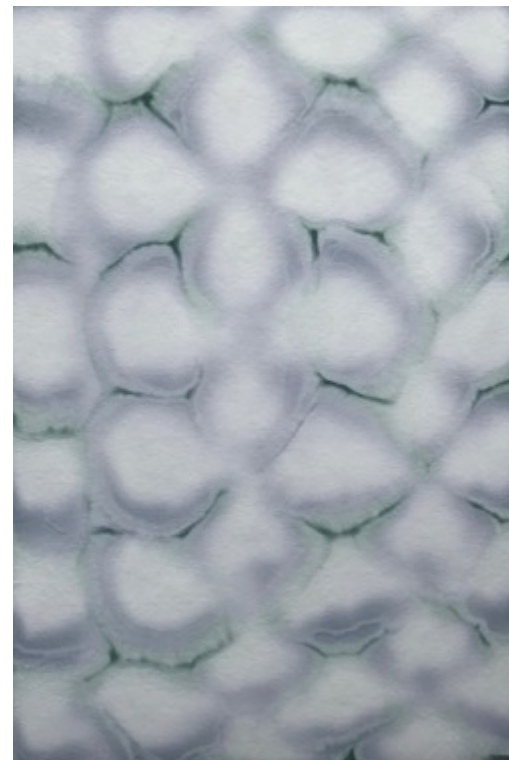
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"I always had a different kind of image in mind, I was looking for unexpected colourfulness that comes out of sensitive reagents. The moment when the first light falls on the not-yet-colour decides on coming shades of green, red or violet. Clarity can be created and clarified. When touched lines swell, they connect with a void and a light-sensitive happening in the paper."

Nora Schattauer

In her first solo exhibition at the Drawing Room, Duisburg-born and Cologne-based artist Nora Schattauer presents two tableaux with works on paper from 2011 to 2024.

Schattauer works with chemical solutions, mineral salts and acids, which are applied to the paper in a controlled manner with a pipette, in such a way that an almost regular, constantly varied pattern forms the basic framework. As the substances penetrate the image carrier, they gain visual depth and thus become a kind of physical resonance surface. They react with the unglued paper, form bonds and are subject to subsequent colour changes. This "reaction process" often gives the works a fluid character; the artist herself speaks of "controlled chance". Although Schattauer cannot completely anticipate the result, empirical values allow her to control it in a variety of ways. Structured composition and colourful appearance are indissolubly interwoven in Schattauer's works. The microscopic variety of forms evokes associations with nature, the pulsation and oscillation conjures up memories of processual procedures. The variety of forms and the colour gradations are almost unlimited. The shapes appear like apparitions that, having come to rest for a moment, can withdraw again – the openness, the potential for change seems to be inscribed in the pictures.



In her artistic work, Nora Schattauer deals with pictorial processes and questions of form that defy traditional genre boundaries, even transcending them. Painting and drawing, line and body, colour and chemical processes unite in her work, but no longer only as a purely creative element, but also as the result of newly tested procedures.

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The art historian and curator Ludwig Seyfarth describes Schattauer's work as follows: 'Anyone coming across Nora Schattauer's art for the first time may assume they are looking at watercolours. Thin, fluid colour seems to have partially spread across the paper and been absorbed by it. Watercolour, painting with watercolour, is predestined for the reproduction of amorphous, liquid and especially water, most prominently in the work of William Turner. The flowing colour not only depicts fluidity but embodies it. Like watercolours, Schattauer's pictures, which could also be described as pictorial experiments, occupy a kind of intermediate position between drawing and painting. However, she does not use traditional watercolours, but experiments with mineral salts and other chemical substances, whose behaviour, also in relation to each other, she researches and which she carefully applies to the paper with a pipette. Nora Schattauer herself refers to this as guided chance.'

Ludwig Seyfarth outlines the unique position of Nora Schattauer's work as follows: 'Ultimately, Nora Schattauer combines the mathematical regularity of the grid, its rigidity, finality and impermeability, with the open, processual, associative and transparent nature of the stain. The strict geometry of the grid is, as it were, distorted and liquefied. In this way, her art also undermines other dichotomies or boundaries that are often drawn on very different levels: between the linear and the painterly, between constructivist and informal abstraction, between representation and self-portrayal of nature. Last but not least, her approach appears almost systematic in the intermediate area between painting and drawing, whereby there are also similarities to the photochemical process. Perhaps they are watercolours after all, only produced with unfamiliar substances? Any attempt to conceptualise Nora Schattauer's art will always be confronted with the fact that something else or the exact opposite could also be true.'

Nora Schattauer is represented in institutional collections such as the Hamburger Kunsthalle, the Kupferstichkabinett Berlin, the Kunstmuseum Bonn, the Museum Morsbroich in Leverkusen, the Kupferstichkabinett Dresden and the Museum Kunstpalast Düsseldorf. From 7 July to 8 October 2023, works by Schattauer were on display at the Kupferstichkabinett Berlin in the exhibition curated by Jenny Graser, World Framed. Contemporary Drawing Art of the Schering Foundation Collection at the Kupferstichkabinett.

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