ALMINE RECH

Not Cool but Compelling

Mar 22 — Aug 18, 2024 | Belvedere 21, Vienna, Austria

The first institutional solo exhibition featuring the art of Tamuna Sirbiladze (1971–2016) will encompass painting, drawing, and installation.

Born in Tbilisi, Sirbiladze developed her signature style in Vienna, distinguished by its highly expressive approach and anthropomorphic visual language.

Recurring themes in Sirbiladze's paintings include the human body, sexuality, and vulnerability, which she initially captured in a boldly figurative manner using a consummate formal vocabulary before increasingly turning to abstraction. Already at an early stage, an unsparing, sometimes even graphic, quality emerged in the depictions of these subjects, all the while incorporating the artist's self-scrutiny (and self-questioning). Her work also demonstrates an intensive engagement with the canon of art and painting, expressed in the meticulous study of iconic works by the Old Masters. Sirbiladze interprets these examples from art history with a sharp eye and a fine, painterly feel. By subjectively accentuating certain attributes, she challenges the connotations of the male image in art history. References to artists such as Vincent van Gogh, Henri Matisse, and Martin Kippenberger run like a thread through her oeuvre, as do religious images including the recurring motif of the pomegranate: Georgia's national fruit and a Christian symbol of fertility.

Not Cool but Compelling is the pithy title of a large abstract work from 2011 executed in oil crayon on canvas. It succinctly describes Tamuna Sirbiladze's enduring concern, namely to give compelling form to her concept of art without being bound by the aesthetic conventions of her time.