

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Vera Mercer: New Works

Exhibition and Book Launch
6 and 7 November 2021, 12 to 6 pm
Villa Heike, Freienwalder Str. 17, 13055 Berlin

The photographer Vera Mercer will be present.



Vera Mercer, Silver Fork, inkjet print, Paris 2020, copyright Vera Mercer

In a pop-up exhibition on the weekend of **6–7 November 2021**, Berlin-born photographer **Vera Mercer** will show a selection of her **New Works** – consisting of exquisite inkjet and platinum prints – at **Villa Heike** in Berlin. She will also present her new book of the same name, and published by DCV in Berlin.

Vera Mercer wowed international audiences a little over ten years ago with her lush, neo-baroque **still life color photography**. The photographs are populated by drinking vessels and vases, fruits and mushrooms, cutlery, and animal cadavers – be they recently deceased or merely the outer shell. Candlesticks also make an appearance, fitted with fresh or worn-down candles, alongside Mercer's ever recurring flower blossoms, which occasionally lose their petals along the way. While some of the dead animals featured in the still lifes seem only to be asleep, others look as if they have recently been exhumed – offering new, more radical vanitas studies bridging beauty and transience, the perennial dualism we sense throughout Vera Mercer's work.

Although some of her *New Works* are now darker and more somber than they were a few years ago, the photographer remains true to her still-life-based photography, which she realizes in multifaceted arrangements at her homes in Omaha and Paris.

Parallel to her colorful, large-format inkjet prints, Vera Mercer has also been producing small-format **platinum prints** since 2018. Their rich tonal range is one of the special features of this photographic printing technique. Black, irregular borders around the image are also characteristic of this high-quality printing process. Some of Mercer's platinum prints could be described as minimalist in terms of their motif, depicting a single blossom or bud, pictured against a neutral background or resting on a silver plate. Other platinum motifs are variations, or black-and-white interpretations, of her colorful floral still lifes. Despite sharing identical motifs, the two techniques create quite different impressions. In contrast to the color inkjets, the toned platinum prints appear more abstract and timeless.



Flowers in Vase, platinum print, Paris 2021 | Untitled, platinum print, Omaha 2020, both: copyright Vera Mercer

In Vera Mercer's work, the world becomes a backdrop – and be it subdued or exuberant, always a kind of showcase. Formally, her images are not dissimilar to the hunting still lifes or Flemish kitchen paintings from the 17th century, but in contemporary photography they are unparalleled. Her illumination of the scenery with candlelight is a further unique aspect of her work. Some of the featured accessories seem slightly anachronistic, which contributes another layer of meaning to the still lifes. Indeed, many of these relics can be found in both of the photographer's apartments, and so naturally pass from her day-to-day life into her pictorial world. In this respect, the photographs are also a kind of self-portrait of Vera Mercer. Inevitably, her work remains surprising and autonomous: in addition to still lifes, she continues to create portraits or hybrids of these genres, drawing on diverse photographic techniques.

Vera Mercer. *New Works*, edited by Matthias Harder, with texts by Sergio Fabio Berardini and Matthias Harder, design: Jonas Kirchner, hardcover, 24 x 28 cm, 96 pages, 40 images, German and English, DCV Verlag, Berlin, ISBN: 978-3-96912-049-1, 28 €

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