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Monocle Minute On Design

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WORDS WITH... / ANNE-MARIE FISCHER

Off the wall

Zürich-based artist Anne-Marie Fischer started her practice to enjoy a greater creative freedom after many years working as an architect. Her abstract art, which she often creates on three-dimensional objects, is still informed by her previous career and tends to be formed in harmony with the surrounding environment. This is most certainly the case with her latest work *Out Of The Blue*, a series of murals at the city's new Wolkenwerk mixed-use development, led by Staufer & Hasler Architects and Ballmoos Partner Architects. Fischer tells us how the project aimed to elevate the building's lobby and evoke a proper sense of arrival for those passing through it.

How do you describe the difference between art and architecture?

Architecture and art both require the same way of thinking and have similar processes. I moved away from architecture because I found that art was a more direct medium. There are no complicated processes; you have an idea and you can just start and do the work. Architecture requires much more collaboration and is always bound by costs.

Your latest project at Wolkenwerk combines the two disciplines. Tell us more.

Because I worked for so long as an architect, I'm always thinking about space and materials. These buildings feature the highest-quality materials, with a lovely colour concept for the interiors. The murals I created provide a contrast to this: featuring soft and curved shapes, they offset the more controlled architecture of the buildings.

What inspired the work itself?

I knew this place long before the new buildings arrived. It was an industrial area and I actually lived in one of the former factories here. It was a very special type of living, because I had a huge space where I worked on large-format pieces and I had 10 massive windows – so I was always watching the sky. I channeled that inspiration into this work and re-interpreted the sky itself onto these murals. I wanted to highlight this discovery of the sky in an abstract way. The feeling comes from midnight-blue and champagne-white colours and these smaller golden touches, which might remind someone of an aeroplane, a UFO or a dream – it's about interpretation.

Why should property developers elevate lobby design?

My murals aim to welcome the residents to these buildings in a very warm way, maybe even a heavenly way. It's important for people arriving home from work to feel a sense of value immediately – and this starts at the front door.

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To hear the full interview, listen to this week's edition of 'Monocle on Design' on Monocle 24.