

18.7.—
20.9.26

Painting:
So what?

Anne Looch

Press kit


Zentrum
Paul Klee

Founded by:


Maurice E. & Martha Müller
and the heirs of Paul Klee

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Anne Loch, AL 206 (detail), 1987, acrylic on canvas, 200 x 140 cm,
Private collection, Photo: Dominique Udry



Anne Loch's (1946–2014) career began in the 1980s amid the Cologne art scene alongside figures such as Rosemarie Trockel, Jenny Holzer and Cindy Sherman. Then the German artist broke radically with the art world and lived very reclusively in Switzerland. This, however, did not involve an interruption of her artistic work: Anne Loch's oeuvre comprises some 1400 works. From 18 July to 20 September 2026, the Zentrum Paul Klee is dedicating to this distinctive painter only the second major solo exhibition in Switzerland, following the one held at the Bündner Kunstmuseum Chur in 2017. Around 80 works, some on a monumental scale, invite visitors to discover Anne Loch's unmistakable body of work.

A yellow flower on a blue ground, almost two metres high. A flock of sheep stretching across more than 3.5 metres. A moth on a canvas nearly one metre high. The interior of a peony blossom or the head of a raven, enlarged to over two metres. Many of Anne Loch's works are of an overwhelming format. It is not only the size of the individual works that is monumental, but also the scope of the oeuvre as a whole: the artist has produced some 1400 paintings as well as numerous works on paper and photographic works throughout a career lasting just forty years. Her extensive estate is kept in Bern.

From the Cologne art scene to the Swiss mountains

The start of Anne Loch's career in the 1980s was highly promising. Early on, she was represented by the prestigious Monika Sprüth Gallery, along with Rosemarie Trockel, Jenny Holzer and Cindy Sherman, and was able to show her works to the public in numerous exhibitions. With her paintings of nature and landscapes, she assumed an extremely independent position in the context of the revival of figurative painting in Germany, and distinguished herself from the gestural and neo-expressionist works of her contemporaries.

A successful artistic career seemed likely, but then, in 1988, Anne Loch made a radical break and withdrew to Thusis in the Swiss Canton of the Grisons. Her retreat was not only geographical but also social: She broke off her contacts with Cologne, and even in Switzerland she maintained regular contact with only a very few people. She did not, however, interrupt her artistic activity: Loch went on working tirelessly in private and created an extensive oeuvre which, besides monumental paintings, also includes drawings, photographs, text and video works. She only showed her works occasionally, for example at the Erika and Otto Friedrich Gallery in Bern.

Between the poles of kitsch and art

With a few exceptions, Anne Loch painted nothing but landscapes, flowers and animals: subjects among the most conventional and clichéd in the history of visual art. Human beings remained largely excluded, along with any claim to anchorage in the social present or a reference to contemporary world events. She herself wrote in her diary:

'But it is comforting for me to know that I do not paint an inventory, do not paint social criticism, do not paint utopia, not a critique of society, not a sociological study [...]. I simply paint lines and their relationship to one another.'

Anne Loch, audio diary, cassette 13 (unpublished)

Even though Loch's paintings seem close to kitsch at first glance, her painting is serious and unironic. Through the monumental enlargement of her motifs, the depicted subjects lose their reference to reality. The works do not emanate spontaneity, but the most precise planning and construction: thanks to her huge photographic estate, it is possible to trace that Anne Loch's works were preceded by preparatory photographic work, with all compositional decisions already made before the first brushstroke was applied to the canvas. The paintings look unreal – alien, in fact – and their cool artificiality creates a sense of detachment. From a distance, the colours appear saturated, and the motifs are clearly recognisable. But the closer one gets, the more the motif dissolves and one becomes absorbed in the canvas, which in places gleams through the thinly applied paint.

Painting for painting's sake

One is tempted to seek hidden meanings and stories in the monumental motifs. But Loch's artistic stance is manifested not in what she paints, but in the way she paints it.

'I have no inner stories to tell, nothing wants to come out of me, assume form. I get this impulse from my motifs. Let's say, the way I need the gaze of a man to feel like kissing. If it happens, it's a different thing, it becomes natural – like painting. In painting there is no longer a motif.'

Anne Loch: «Hinterrhein / Indifferent», in: [Anne Loch. der Soldat und die Gärtnerin.](#), eds. André Born and Anne Loch, Bern, 2003

Anne Loch was primarily interested in painting as such, and in the engagement with colour, surface and space. In the process, the motifs became interchangeable. Thus, Loch reveals herself as an artist of her time, putting pictorial worlds to the test. She played with the conventions of representation, enlarged her photographic motifs to a monumental scale and probed the boundaries of representation. The everyday motif loses any relation to its real counterpart, and the works blur the familiar boundaries between figuration and abstraction, painting and drawing, reality and dream.

In this way, painting becomes perceptible as an autonomous form of seeing and experiencing, rather than just as a mere depiction of the world. For this reason, the interest in Anne Loch's work lies not least in the fact that her painting does not so much give answers as ask questions: about the status of the image, the reliability of seeing and an artistic attitude that deliberately avoids the establishment of meaning.

The Estate of Anne Loch

The few people with whom Anne Loch remained in contact after her return to Switzerland and later include André Born and Peter Spahr. They were the ones who, after she was diagnosed with cancer, arranged for accommodation and care until her death. It is probably for this reason that Anne Loch left her entire work to André Born, which is why the artist's estate is today in Bern.

Opening

The opening of the exhibition will take place on

Friday, 17 July 2026 from 18:00.

Admission to the exhibition is free on this evening.

Curator

Amélie Joller

With the support of

Kanton Bern, Federal Office of Culture, Burgergemeinde Bern

Media preview

We cordially invite you to the media preview with curator Amélie Joller on **Thursday, 16 July 2026 at 10:00 at the Zentrum Paul Klee.**

Please register via press@zpk.org.

Curator Amélie Joller and the Administrator of the Estate of Anne Loch, André Born, are available for interviews. For organizational reasons, please let us know in advance if you are interested in an interview.



Digital Guide

There is a freely accessible Digital Guide to accompany the exhibition. It can be accessed from Thursday, 16 July 2026 via QR code or guide.zpk.org/en/anne-loch.

Guided Tour in English

Sunday, 23 August 2026, 15:00

Catalogue

Anne Loch. Malerei: Na und? / Painting: So what?

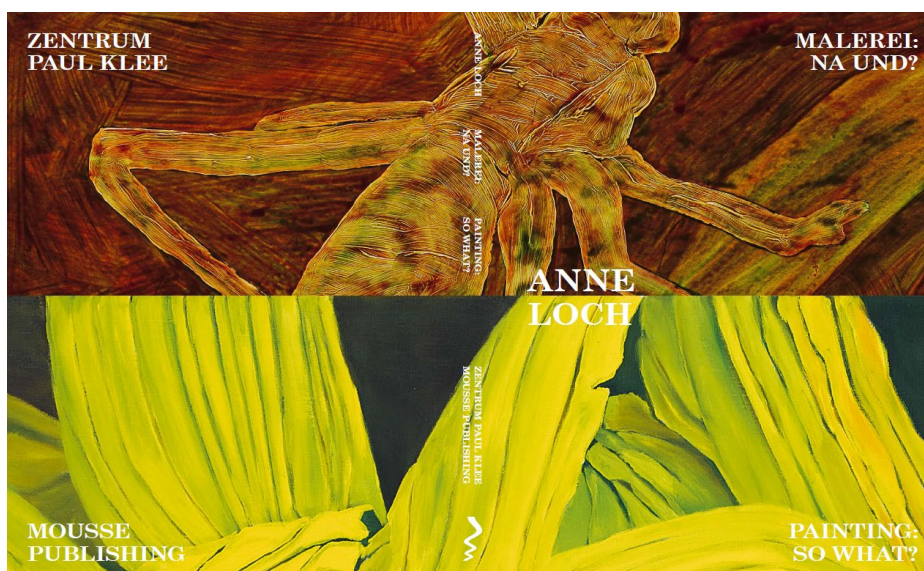
Publication in German and English with a fold-out cover

Published by Amélie Joller and Nina Zimmer

216 pages, 21 x 28 cm, Softcover

Mousse Publishing: ISBN 978-88-6749-758-4

CHF 34



Biography

1946

Anne Loch was born on 11 December in Minden, Nordrhein-Westphalia, Germany.

1968–1971

Trains as a fashion designer and works as seamstress.

1972–1978

Studies at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, attends the master class of Klaus Rinke, whose other students include Harald Klingelhöller, Reinhard Mucha, and Ulrich Looock.

1979

Spends time in Venice and Ravenna.

1980

In early summer, Anne Loch moves to Naples, where she experiences the devastating Irpinia earthquake on 23 November. She moves in the circle surrounding Lucio Amelio, the founder of a gallery that has been dedicated to the contemporary international avant-garde since 1964.

1981

Exhibition at the Goethe-Institut in Naples.

1982

Exhibition at Klapperhof 33 in Cologne with, among others, Peter Fischli, Gerard Klever, Milan Kunc, Rosemarie Trockel and David Weiss.

1984

Returns to Cologne. During the next few years she creates colourful floral and landscape paintings in monumental formats.

Anne Loch is one of the artists, alongside Rosemarie Trockel, Jenny Holzer, Barbara Kruger and Cindy Sherman, who are represented and specially supported by the gallery established by Monika Sprüth in the historic centre of Cologne in 1983. Monika Sprüth exhibits Anne Loch's work in a number of exhibitions.

Becomes acquainted with Günther Förg, Walter Dahn, and the 'Neue Wilde' Martin Kippenberger and Volker Tannert.

1987

First solo exhibition at Neuer Aachener Kunstverein.

1988

Solo exhibition at Bonner Kunstverein.

Anne Loch turns her back completely on the art scene in the Rhineland. She separates from her husband and her two adoptive children and retreats to the seclusion of Thusis in the Grisons. Around 500 mostly large format works are produced between 1988 and 2002.

She becomes acquainted with the Bern gallery owners Erika and Otto Friedrich, who organise several exhibitions of her work in the city during the next few years.

1989

Start of a love affair that lasts many years but ultimately remains unfulfilled, and which coincides with a key creative period.

Anne Loch begins to make recordings on tape that she later develops into diaries (unpublished).

She continues to explore nature and landscape in her painting. Limitless numbers of photographs are taken on long hikes, in her studio and of television programmes.

1991

Solo exhibition *HINTERRHEIN INDIFFERENTI* at Galleria Toselli in Milan.

1994

Exhibition *Oltre la montagna dipinta* at Studio d'arte Raffaelli in Trento, together with, among others, Helgi Friðjónsson, Jan Knap, Karin Kneffel and Salvo.

1995

Outlines of the films *Anarche* and *Der Tag*.

2002

Returns from Thusis to Duisburg, moves to Essen in 2008.

Anne Loch is focussed only on her work. She has little or no contact with the art scene, galleries or art institutions.

She continues to work on groups of works started in Switzerland. She also turns to the production of new paintings in the same large format. She creates works on dazzlingly white backgrounds: sheep, deer, trees, flowers, landscapes, as well as abstract forms. She paints and draws with acrylic. Her tones range from bronze and tin via brown, black and blue to rich madder red. She draws with permanent markers and paints large landscapes and animals on white or roughly filled supports. Photography and writing continue to form part of her oeuvre.

2013

Diagnosed as seriously ill with cancer, she retreats to Bergell, where she is cared for by friends. Despite everything, Anne Loch continues to devote her time to processing photographs and writes extensively.

2014

Anne Loch dies on 4 April at Ospedale Asilo della Bregaglia Flin in Promontogno in Bergell.

2017

Solo exhibition *Anne Loch. Artificial paradise* at the Bündner Kunstmuseum Chur.

Press images

Download press images:

zpk.org/en/about-us/media

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01

Anne Loch

AL 206, 1987

Acrylic on unprimed cotton

200 × 140 cm

Private collection

Photo: Dominique Uldry, Bern



02

Anne Loch

AL 213, 1987

Acrylic on unprimed cotton

180 × 280 cm

Estate of Anne Loch

Photo: Dominique Uldry, Bern



03

Anne Loch

AL 235, 1987

Acrylic on unprimed cotton

280 × 370 cm (2 parts)

Estate of Anne Loch

Photo: Dominique Uldry, Bern



04

Anne Loch

AL 256, 1988

Acrylic on canvas

185 × 280 cm

Private Collection. Courtesy Galerie Friedrich, Bern/Basel

Photo: Dominique Uldry, Bern



05

Anne Loch

AL 279, 1989

Acrylic on canvas

180 × 280 cm

BKW Energie AG Bern

Photo: Dominique Uldry, Bern



06

Anne Loch

AL 356, 1990

Gouache on cardboard

30 × 40 cm

Private collection

Photo: Dominique Uldry, Bern



07

Anne Loch

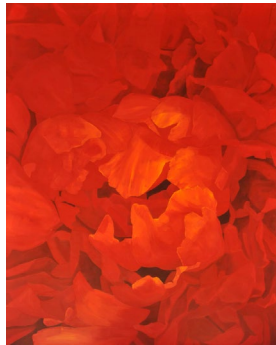
AL 603, 1993

Acrylic on canvas

180 × 280 cm

Kunstmuseum Bern, donation

Photo: Markus Mühlheim



08

Anne Loch

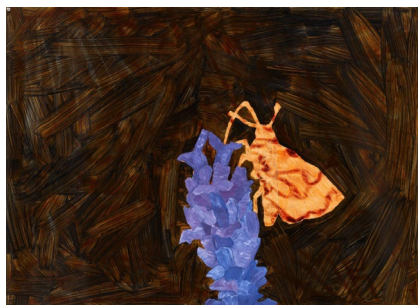
AL 641, 1996

Acrylic on canvas

220 × 180 cm

Private collection. Courtesy Sprüth
Magers

Photo: Dominique Uldry, Bern



09

Anne Loch

AL Z 29, 1997

Varnish and gouache on paper

93 × 129 cm

BONDO Collection

Photo: Dominique Uldry, Bern



10

Anne Loch

AL 925, 2002

Acrylic on canvas

200 × 142 cm

Private collection

Photo: Dominique Uldry, Bern



11

Anne Loch

AL 1308, 2007

Acrylic on canvas

215 × 360 cm

Estate of Anne Loch

Photo: Dominique Uldry, Bern



12

Anne Loch

AL 1431, 2010

Acrylic on canvas

240 × 155 cm

Estate of Anne Loch

Photo: Dominique Uldry, Bern



13

Anne Loch

AL 1432, 1997

Acrylic on canvas

150 × 235 cm

BONDO Collection

Photo: Dominique Uldry, Bern



14

Anne Loch

AL 1436, 2010

Acrylic on canvas

240 × 220 cm

Estate of Anne Loch

Photo: Dominique Uldry, Bern



15

Anne Loch

AL 1438, 2010

Acrylic on canvas

210 × 160 cm

Estate of Anne Loch

Photo: Dominique Uldry, Bern



16

Anne Loch

AL Spino 5, 2014

Permanent marker on black-and-white
photograph

27 × 20 cm

Private collection

Photo: Dominique Uldry, Bern



17

Anne Loch in her studio in Thusis, 1989

Estate of Anne Loch

Photo: Christoph Guler, Thusis

Current and upcoming exhibitions at the Zentrum Paul Klee

Roberto Burle Marx. Modernismo tropical
17.10.2026–7.2.2027

Kosmos Klee. The Collection

Fokus. Klee's versos
until 23 August 2026

Fokus. Florence Henri (1893–1982)
29.8.2026–10.1.2027

Opening hours

Tuesday–Sunday
10:00–27:00

Monday closed

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