

Press Release

Vivian Suter – Frank = Panchito

9 February – 19 March 2022

Opening Tuesday, 8 February 2022

Vivian Suter's works are akin to nature in their way of constantly becoming and unbecoming, rather than ever assuming a final state. In the process, though painted with a brush, they are casually exposed to sunlight, mud sliding down the hill, rain and falling leaves. The elementary forces tenderly – and sometimes violently – infiltrate the fabric called *manta* which is Suter's backdrop. But her works are also personalities. Titles such as *Tintin's Sofa*, *Bonzo's Dream* or *Bonzo, Tintin & Nina* refer to the artist's beloved trio of dogs at her home in Panajachel, who are not only portrayed on some canvasses, but also frequently add imprints of their paws on paintings' surfaces. These animals and a few humans form a community that, until recently, included Suter's mother Elisabeth Wild, who passed away two years ago right at the beginning of the pandemic. Wild's work has been shown alongside Suter's in several exhibitions – the small world of geometric, crystalline forms in Wild's collages forming a counterpart to Suter's expansive organic paintings.

The equation *Frank = Panchito* quite bluntly explains the two names her son goes by – given name and Spanish nickname. Referencing her son in the show's title comes at a time in Suter's career when art institutions around the world are showcasing her work, and she has become a well-known name. Gone are the days when she would paint unbothered in her garden studio in Panajachel, without interference for months and years. At this point of becoming a subject of international attention, Suter is reaching into a space of privacy and vulnerability. Frank, or Panchito, is not only her son: he is part of the continuing lineage. Elisabeth would have been 100 years old only a few days before *Frank = Panchito* opens.

Since decades, Suter has been transforming the slope, on which coffee used to be cultivated and harvested, and where she lives and works into a subtropical forest-garden. *Vivian's Garden*, which has now been referred to in numerous essays and journalistic texts about her work, is more than a collection of planted trees, shrubs and flowers – it is the artist's legacy. And most recently, Frank's sound recording studio has been built on the grounds of the estate which was formerly used by the mother-daughter duo exclusively. In the lush, green space where Tintin hangs out, Bonzo dreams among the tall trees, and Nina rubs her paws in pigments while Vivian paints, Frank and the musicians work with sound in their studio, creating yet another vision in the garden.

Vivian Suter has lived and worked in Panajachel, Guatemala for over thirty years. Her prolific career spans decades and she has exhibited internationally at such institutions as Kunsthau Zürich; Camden Arts Centre; Tate Liverpool; Art Institute of Chicago; documenta 14, Athens and Kassel; High Line, New York; Jewish Museum, New York; Taipei Biennial; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Kunsthalle Basel; Brücke Museum, Berlin; and Museo Tamayo, Mexico City. She currently has exhibitions at Vleeshal, Middelburg; Kunstmuseum Luzern; and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid. In 2022-23, she will be showcased at Kunstmuseum Basel; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Rudolfinum, Prague; Secession, Vienna; and GAMeC, Bergamo.

*All works in the exhibition are Untitled, n.d., mixed media on canvas.