

Adelheid Straten

"Lisel Salzer, Lisl Weil, Hilde Spiel. Three women artists - three friends"

Museum Zinkenbacher Malerkolonie, St Gilgen at Wolfgangsee
Until October 13, 2024

„Everything that promotes cultural development also works against war.“ (transl.)
This quote is above the entrance to the exhibition and comes from a letter written in 1932 by Sigmund Freud to Albert Einstein.

The Zinkenbach Painters' Colony Museum in St. Gilgen on Lake Wolfgang owes its existence to the commitment of the Zinkenbach Painters' Colony Museum Association, which has made its mission to track down artists who were in Zinkenbach every summer between 1926 and 1939 to relax in the wonderful landscape, meet each other and paint. Initially 14 of them were known by name, but there may have been around 30 artists in total. They are hardly present in the cultural memory; their lives had to be researched because National Socialism had thwarted them. The first exhibition on the Zinkenbach painters initiated by the museum association started in the summer of 2001. The old schoolhouse in St. Gilgen at Wolfgangsee stands for education and knowledge transfer – it was obvious to revitalize the historic, centrally and beautifully located building and use

it for cultural purposes. If you go up the wooden stairs, the signatures of the „Zinkenbachers“ transferred to the wall catch your eye, as if they were their autographs. It is no longer possible to realize that the exhibition rooms were past classrooms. The view through the lattice windows falls on the hilly landscape or, on the other side, on the lake, „fitting“ with the association's aim of acquainting people with the Austrian artists who enjoyed the Wolfgangsee in the summer between the two world wars.

Lisel Salzer, Lisl Weil and Hilde Spiel have a common fate, they escaped National Socialism. The exhibition



Lisel Salzer: New York, 1940-60. Photo: Museum ZMK



Lisel Salzer: Sailing, Lake Washington. Enamel colours, 1940-60. Source: exhibition catalogue



Hilde Spiel and Lisel Salzer in a rowing boat on Wolfgangsee, 1934. Source: ONB/ÖLA

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Lisl Weil draws in a live performance at the sound of Paul Dukas' „The Sorcerer's Apprentice“. Photo: Donna Darden-Medina, 1967. Source: exhibition catalogue

reconstructs their biographies, which are full of courage and creativity; they were able to build a new life for themselves in unfamiliar surroundings.

The majority of Lisel Salzer's works are in the collection of the Zinkenbach painters' colony. Most of the pictures were created after 1938 in exile and are in American private ownership, from where some of them have found their way into the exhibition. She created expressive portraits, but also smaller, delicate landscapes in bright enamel technique, for which the artist was particularly valued and well-known in America. Lisl Weil was a brilliant commercial artist and in the 1930s she designed many covers, illustrations and charmingly ironic picture stories. It was particularly important to her to appeal to children (for example: „Wolferl – The first six years in the life of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart“). The exhibition also shows a video of a fascinating performance in which she draws with great verve and dance. Hilde Spiel wrote many novels, articles, reports and touching autobiographical books that have their origins in the Zinkenbach painters' colony. „Confusions at Wolfgangsee“ is about this, with the author taking on the role of a male narrator.

This exhibition from June 22nd to October 13th, which is a contribution to the „Cultural Capital Bad Ischl / Salzkammergut 2024“, also has an accompanying volume:

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Lisl Weil: Cover of „Die Bühne“ No. 328, Vienna, May 1932. Photo: ÖNB/ANNO. The trimming of „Bühne“ often runs through the title of the magazine.

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