Dóra Maurer

BY ALICE BUTLER

A Very Personal Story

Dóra Maurer's retrospective at White Cube is an intimate look at her work and ideas over the past four decades. The exhibition is not just an exhibition; it is a conversation between Maurer and the viewer, a dialogue about the nature of memory, identity, and the human body.

Maurer's work is characterized by a playful engagement with the body and its representation. In the early 1970s, she began creating self-portraits that challenged traditional notions of beauty and femininity. Her experiments with mirrors and photography created fragmented and distorted images of herself, blurring the line between the real and the imagined.

One of the highlights of the exhibition is "Phases of Movements" (1972), a series of photographs that explore the human form in motion. The images are created by a new photographic technique, frottage, which involves rubbing a textured surface against a sheet of paper to create an impression. Maurer used this technique to create a series of images that are both abstract and representational, capturing the fluidity and complexity of movement.

Another key part of the exhibition is the series "Reversible and Changeable" (1974), a set of five paintings that are intended to be viewed from both sides. The paintings are created by means of hidden frames, which allow the viewer to see different images depending on the angle of view. This creates a sense of duality and ambiguity, challenging the viewer to engage with the work on a deeper level.

Maurer's colour paintings are also on display, including "Hidden Structures" (1977–80), a set of six frottages that are created by rubbing a textured surface against paper and then collageing the resulting images. The paintings are a mix of abstract and representational, with forms that appear to be floating or shifting in space.

The exhibition also includes "Proportions" (1976), a series of six drawings that are created by measuring the artist's body with a yardstick. The drawings are intended to be seen as a whole, with each part of the body being measured and then drawn in a way that highlights its proportions. This creates a sense of the body as a whole, rather than as a collection of separate parts.

Maurer's work is characterized by a blend of abstraction and representation, with a focus on the body and its representation. Her experiments with photography and frottage create images that are both beautiful and disturbing, challenging the viewer to engage with the work on a deeper level.

In conclusion, Dóra Maurer's retrospective at White Cube is a must-see exhibition for anyone interested in modern and contemporary art. The exhibition is a testament to the artist's talent and creativity, and a reminder of the power of art to challenge and inspire us.