

Isabella Fürnkäs (*1988 in Tokyo) is a French-German artist who works in a variety of media. The body of work involves equal shares of video, multimedia installation, performance and drawing. In her multi-layered oeuvre she addresses questions of physical and spatial intimacy, the influence of digitalization on interpersonal relationships, and the transformation of social communication patterns. Fürnkäs investigates visual spaces of our present and creates contextual shifts that echo our own vulnerabilities. In the context of her works, inner images and multi-layered questions are transformed into a repertoire of media-reflexive actions via performative, installative and time-based techniques. Experimental by nature her works involve a subtle comparison of the individual and its society, creating situations of disruption and (re-)creation. By using a wide range of materials such as glass, epoxy-coated cloth, fluids, fabrics or pottery in combination with audio, video and performance, her works open up to potential mental spheres beyond the familiar, in the unexpected state of being in-between.

Fürnkäs is the recipient of the Förderpreis des Landes NRW and the Paris Cité Internationale des Arts grant. She has participated in numerous residency programs, including the Bronner Residency Tel Aviv; Goethe Institut, Dakar and the travel grant of the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen. Furthermore, she is a scholar of the Akademie der Künste Berlin and the winner of the first prize of the strike a pose K21 Kunstsammlung NRW award in 2021. In 2022, she is the recipient of the Berlin Masters Schliemann Residency program.

Her work was exhibited at Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany (2022); Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin, Germany (2022); Villa Schöningen, Potsdam, Germany (2022); KINDL - Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany (2020); Kunsthaus NRW, Kornelimünster, Germany (2020); Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany (2019); Kunstverein Göttingen, Göttingen, Germany (2019); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria (2018); the 13. Biennale for Contemporary Art Dakar, Senegal (2018); Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany (2016); Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, Germany (2016); Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul, South Korea (2016); and in the project space of the Julia Stoschek Collection in Düsseldorf, Germany (2013). Her solo exhibitions and performances were on view at Museum Moyland, Kleve, Germany (2022); Salon Acme, Mexico City, Mexico (2020); Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany (2018); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria (2018); Osthaus Museum, Hagen, Germany (2018); Akademie der Künste der Welt, Cologne, Germany (2017); Pogobar KW Institute for Contemporary Art Berlin, Germany (2017) and Manifesta 11, Zurich, Switzerland (2016). Her work is represented internationally in numerous private and public collections.

IN FLAGRANTI Intervention

Museum Moyland, Kleve
15.10.2022 - 15.01.2023

With her artistic intervention in the chapel of Museum Schloss Moyland, Isabella Fürnkäs enters into a subtle exchange with the historically charged spaces of the museum: as a scholarship holder of the BERLIN MASTERS 2022 funding programme, the artist spent six weeks in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence as part of the Schliemann Residency, where she developed, among other things, the new video installation for the museum. With her site-specific multimedia installation, a room within a room is created on site, the opening of which takes the visitor to Tokyo. Furthermore, the artist is showing large-format drops made of specially hand-blown ruby glass, which open up an exciting dialogue with Georg Meistermann's windows.

- Text by Antje-Britt Möhlmann

In Flagranti, 2022
Video installation, projection on round tiled platform Ø 1,65 m
Video 18:36min, color/no sound, loop

The Desiring Machines, 2022
Mouth-blown ruby glass drops, engraved words
Approximately 90 cm





Installation view
In Flagranti,
Museum Moyland, Kleve (2022)

BUILD ME A HOUSE Solo exhibition

Hua International, Berlin
03.12.2021 - 13.03.2022

Hua International is pleased to announce Build Me a House, a solo exhibition by Isabella Fürnkäs. In her multi-media work, the Japanese-born French-German artist explores questions of bodily intimacy, digital relationality, and the fragility of societal structures.

Build Me a House will bring together a new body of sculpture, sound, performance, drawing, and video. The focal point of the exhibition is a durational performance and sound work that unfolds around two, large metal sculptures: dome-like constructions that resemble rudimentary dwellings. With their cage-like structures, these forms emphasize a fluidity between interior and exterior space, permeability and interiority, shelter and confinement. Entitled Ataraxia, the performance takes its name from a Greek philosophical term that means a “state of serene calmness” or “an untroubled and tranquil state of the soul.” The performers Nikolas Brummer and Marlene Kollender activate the sculptures—which are sheathed in thin layers of fabric and projected upon—with actions that imply moments of inhabitation, formation, and deconstruction. Construction stones encircle the sculptures, which the performers slowly move around them. Their constant movements in and around the sculptures, as well as the essentially nomadic nature of these objects, gesture toward the impermanence, transience, and variability of all things—towards finding freedom in flux. A sound scape designed by Anchoress and Tobias Textor, who will additionally compose live music for the performance during the opening, adds a sonic dimension to this immersive, multi-medial experience.

In the same room, a series of interchangeable black and white ceramic orbs are installed on the wall. Reminiscent of the abstract strategy game Go (Weiqi), they suggest endless variations of flexible constellations. Fürnkäs’ Insomnia Drawings resonate with the constant connection and interchangeable routines enacted by Ataraxia’s performers, as well as the porousness of her igloo-like sculptures. A new series of drawings entitled The Red Drawings will also be shown. Emerging from a raw, intimate practice, the drawings “visualize a moment of cognitive overload” in which one’s inner boundaries collapse and the world enters unhindered. The final room of the exhibition stages a meeting of the digital and the organic. A video entitled The Truth Lies in the Eye of the Beholder loops atop a half-ton of earth. Drawn from a personal archive of footage shot by Fürnkäs, this associative web of images works like a visual collage that combines and overlays countless images, imparting the sensation of drifting amidst ambiguous flows, movements, interferences, and interjections.

- Text by Jesi Khadivi

Watch the documentation video here: <https://vimeo.com/702855821>





Ataraxia, 2021
Multi-media installation, stainless steel structures (230 x 230 x 150cm), textile,
projection of 4 videos (9 min each, color/silent, on loop)

Ataraxia, 2021
Performance with Nikolas Brummer & Marlene Kollender
Live musical performance by Tobias Textor, sound scape by Anchoress
Costumes by John Galliano, 032c, lent by Ritual Projects, styling by Nellee Dii
Photos by Timo Ohler and Robert Rieger





Isabella Fűrnkäs' performative installations involve precious looking, hand stitched garments and pieces of clothing that operate as a device-like generator of a meticulously scripted scenario. Affined to high fashion shows, Fűrnkäs' active settings, involving gender fluid performers/ models wrapped around designed drapes, suggest a totally aestheticized alternative universe and life form. Like a high fashion show, these settings invent their own notion of inhabited space and activated body. The pieces of clothing in which Fűrnkäs' performers/models are dressed are not inferior to the actions they do. Rather than transparent covers, they require a particular set of behaviors, a specific image of the human body. They place the bodies of the performers/models in a shared tangent with the realm of things they are made of – the architectural/sculptural elements, as well as the elements of sound and light, they are marked by.

Each of Fűrnkäs' performance works are always at least a duet, most consist of two people, some present more. The individual's silhouette (to use a fashion word) is as important as the other silhouettes in the group. What is perhaps the deepest trait Fűrnkäs' performances have in common with fashion is the idea of the total look; each look matters.

In her most recent performance, titled *Ataraxia* (2021), the two performers sing to each other and to the audience, sometimes whispering in each other's ears. Fűrnkäs often uses terms from Greek philosophy, recalling the ancient civilization these terms are associated with (in ancient Greek *Ataraxia* describes a state of serene calmness). On this background one can read the performers' activity of moving brick stones throughout the space as an act aiming at building from scratch, at exposing and tracing the foundations of civilization. This foundational atmosphere is contrasted with the scenery evoked by the performance which is at once that science fictional landscape of the future and that of the dawn of humankind.

-Text by Ory Dessau

Ataraxia, 2021
Performance with Nikolas Brummer & Marlene Kollender, activation of Go, glazed ceramic
Approx. 6 x 6cm, 31 white & 99 black (130 in total)





Installation view
Build Me A House,
Hua International, Berlin (2021)



The Truth Lies in the Eye of the Beholder, 2021
Video installation, projection on earth, 10:38min, loop/colour, sound,
text read by Ariel Gaba

THE TRUTH LIES IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER I Video installation

Text from the video installation read by Ariel Gaba

All is repetition in the temporal series, in relation to this symbolic image. The past itself is repetition by default, and it prepares this other repetition constituted by the metamorphosis in the present.

Historians sometimes look for empirical correspondences between the present and the past, but however rich it may be, this network of historical correspondences involves repetition only by analogy or similitude.

Repetition is never a historical fact, but rather the historical condition under which something new is effectively produced.

Repetition is a condition of action before it is a concept of reflection. We produce something new only on condition that we repeat - once in the mode which constitutes the past, and once more in the present of metamorphosis.

This image itself is divided, torn into two unequal parts.

Nevertheless, it thereby draws together the totality of time. It must be called a symbol by virtue of the unequal parts which it subsumes and draws together, but draws together as unequal parts.

Such a symbol adequate to the totality of time may be expressed in many ways: to throw time out of joint, to make the sun explode, to throw oneself into the volcano, to kill god or the father.

This symbolic image constitutes the totality of time to the extent that it draws together the caesura, the before and the after.

The fact that two series cannot exist without each other indicates not only that they are complementary, but that by virtue of their dissimilarity and their difference in kind they borrow from and feed into one another.

The virtual object is a partial object - not simply because it lacks a part which remains in the real, but in itself and for itself because it is cleaved or doubled into two virtual parts, one of which is always missing from the other.

The virtual is never subject to the global character which affects real objects.

It is -not only by its origin but by its own nature - a fragment, a shred or a remainder. It lacks its own identity.

The good and the bad mother - or, in terms of the paternal duality, the serious and the playful father - are not two partial objects but the same object in so far as it has lost its identity in the double.

Conversely, these virtual objects are incorporated in the real objects.

In this sense they can correspond to parts of the subject's body, to another person, or even to very special objects such as toys or fetishes.

This incorporation is in no way an identification, or even an introjection, since it exceeds the limits of the subject. Far from opposing itself to the process of isolation, it complements it.

However strong the incoherence between successive presents, we have the impression that each of them plays out 'the same life' at different levels, this would be what we call destiny.

Destiny never consists in step-by-step deterministic relations between presents which succeed one another according to the order of a represented time.

Rather, it implies between successive presents non-localizable connections, actions at a distance, systems of replay, resonance and echoes, objective chances, signs, signals and roles which transcend spatial locations and temporal successions.

The question for us, however, is whether or not we can penetrate the passive synthesis of memory; whether we can in some sense live the being in itself of the past in the same way that we live the passive synthesis of habit.

The entire past is conserved in itself, but how can we save it for ourselves, how can we penetrate that in-itself without reducing it to the former present that it was, or to the present present in relation to which it is past?

How can we save it for ourselves?



The Red Drawings (ongoing series), 2021
Series of one hundred drawings, mixed media on paper, framed with white varnish ash
26.6 x 22.3cm



Installation view
Build Me A House,
Hua International, Berlin (2021)

OPEN SECRETS

Video installation

The core visual element of Open Secrets by Isabella Fürnkäs is a video collage which is projected (through video mapping) onto an enclosure that is pyramid in shape. The object given its size, a height of 150 cm, so that the top of the work approaches the neck of many viewers as well as its stance resting directly on the floor recalls an intimate dwelling, specifically the structure of a tent. The surface onto which the video is projected is a patchwork of monochrome silk switches that appear as skins sewn together to stretch over the stainless-steel polls that shape the triangular contour of the sculpture. Taken together the work, like other installations by Fürnkäs, uses the “cut up” to evoke the deeply psychoanalytic motifs of child, the other, the clown or the insane but the work is not strictly inward looking. The title refers perhaps to knowledge withheld, a secret, but one that is also known to the other hence being open or simply poorly kept - as might be the case with a child. Given the tents rudimentary structure it too could be the creation of a child but its complete refinement belies its sophistication of a mature working mind. Fürnkäs use of styling here is the highest degree of finesse; it is marked by every move in the installation being fine-tuned to finish. Yet it is not as some minimalist precursors a fetish polished finish it is instead juxtaposed with a sense of the badly made or slapped together even in the crude stitching barbaric. The video collage has moments of close crop of a mouth and tongue a displacement of subjecthood onto objecthood along with other images fingers, flesh, water, hands zoomed to fingernails all equally displaced from the body they are attached to. Fürnkäs knows the tropes of psychoanalysis in art and has long disgusted the surrealist and much later post-modern feminist criticism that has kept this modality valid by strongly critiquing it as patriarchal in nature. More so in returning pleasure to the inner subject of the female her work also looks outward to the contours of self and inorganic non-self, true to a motif of the nature culture divide that concerns her work. In a final hidden moment of the installation, a single photograph of The British Crown Jewels is stitched into a pouch on the back of the tent - for the artist it is “a symbol of power lying directly under your skin”.

- Text by Justin Polera

Exhibition list

Shapes of Shelter, Platform, Munich (2022),
Die Wirklichkeit ist sowieso da, Weltkunstzimmer, Düsseldorf (2022),
Staycation Bucharest, Catinca Tabacaru & Sandwich & Goethe Institut (2021)

Open Secrets, 2021

Video installation, stainless steel structure, silk cloth, projection
Approx. 150 x 100 x 100 cm, video 8:45min, color/sound, loop
Photos by Catalin Georgescu & Weltkunstzimmer





Text excerpt from the sound installation

Disconnecting me
 Silently
 Peeling off
 My wounds
 Leaving traces of
 Unseen material on the edge
 Of recognition
 Wshhhhh Wshhhhhh Wshhhhhh
 Slowly Quietly
 Kissing flesh.
 Drowning in your secret
 Hollow pockets.
 Eye to Eye.
 Before writing to you,
 I perfume myself all over.
 Irresponsible blood vessels float
 and linger in my bloodstream.
 Vein to vein
 Head to toe
 Pleasantly, I listen.
 B-boom B-boom
 B-boom B-boom
 Gently playing,
 Obsessively Amused.
 The boomerang effect.
 Wshhhhh Wshhhhhh Whhhhhh
 Consume my innocence
 I'm wearing it on my sleeve
 You mark my heart
 You make it bleed
 Spit on me again
 I will reveal what's left
 Come, peel it off,
 And, enjoy.
 Wanting Waiting Wanting Waiting Wanting Waiting.
 Come on,
 Let's laugh at our naked thoughts.

Installation view

Die Wirklichkeit ist sowieso da, curated by Thomas Rieger & Janine Blöß,
 Weltkunstzimmer, Düsseldorf (2022)



Open Secrets (video stills), 2021/2022
Video 8:45min, color/sound, loop



SIAMESE DREAMS Solo exhibition

Windhager von Kaenel, Zurich
17.09.2021 - 03.12.2021

We used to sleep in our beds. Today, we live in them. Advanced digitalization has progressively capitalized on this intrinsically intimate space. Through our mobile devices, we bring the world into bed with us and, by the same token, expose ourselves to the world in bed. The bed—perhaps the most intimate place of retreat—is thus increasingly becoming a public zone.

In her multi-layered oeuvre, which includes video, multimedia installation, performance, and drawing, Fürnkäs addresses questions of physical and spatial intimacy, the influence of digitalization on interpersonal relationships, and the transformation of social communication patterns. A mattress lies in the middle of the darkened exhibition space. Playing on the slightly rumpled pillows and bed sheets is the video work *Siamese Dreams* (2021), which was developed specifically for the exhibition in Zurich. The projection consists of specially filmed recordings by the artist that are assembled into a video collage. Close-ups of everyday motifs are rendered alien through this macroscopic perspective and reflect a fascination for the absurdity of the everyday. From this seemingly arbitrary succession of images and the concentrated emotions they elicit, the dreamlike character of the work unfolds, lingering at the interface between remembering and forgetting.

In addition to the video installation, the exhibition includes forty selected drawings from the ongoing work complex *Insomnia Drawings* (2007–), which are installed in the corner of the room like an opened book. The *Insomnia Drawings* form what is now a series of around five hundred drawings. They establish free associative spaces for the viewer and reveal the articulations of a mental coping process. The motifs on the Japanese paper in a consistent format range between poetic reflections on the present and non-verbal descriptions of the state of an inner life. Feelings and moments of confusion are expressed in these abstracted depictions—they resemble a memory aid, an archive, or a diary. Through these drawings, we as viewers can become acquainted with the artist's emotional worlds, and in doing so we can recognize ourselves in them, too.

The exhibition *Siamese Dreams* creates a space that is highly personal yet accessible to everyone. The artist also experiments with the thresholds between the body and the imagination, the unconscious and the conscious, the individual and the public. It is not so much a matter of defining boundaries, but of exploring these liminal spaces and allowing them to be experienced.

- Text by Paula Ursprung

Watch the video documentation here: <https://vimeo.com/670626882>



Siamese Dreams, 2021
Video installation, video projection on mattress with durational performance on September 18th & 24th 2021,
Video 12:47min, color/sound, loop
Performance with Jules Claude Gisler



Installation view
Siamese Dreams,
Windhager von Kaenel, Zurich (2021)



Installation view
Siamese Dreams,
Windhager von Kaenel, Zurich (2021)



Installation view
Siamese Dreams,
Windhager von Kaenel, Zurich (2021)

Insomnia Drawings, 2007-ongoing
Selection of 40 drawings
25.5 x 17.5cm (framed: 32.8 x 25.5cm)

MNEMONIC Print

Small elements of everyday life – the media we consume, the images we see – make up our identities. In Isabella Fürnkäs' artistic practice, different types of media act as tools, to constantly balance out these everyday aspects of being. Combining different images, her work Mnemonic forms a contradictory liaison of past and present, beauty and brutality; resulting in a parallelism of familiarity and unsettlement. A tarpaulin or banner made of PVC materializes a collage of images, ranging from antique sculptures over pornography to odd playground slides, persistently circling around the human in different states and roles. The viewer is drawn into the well-known flood of images but simultaneously confronted with its perversion and overload. Fürnkäs takes advantage of our relationship to the image. It's power over our emotions as demonstrations of political or social power become the playground for her work. She dissects systems of visual politics and rearranges the tracks our culture leaves. In this plastic memory, relicts of antic culture merge with our search histories and tell us where we come from and what defines us. A constant trickle of thoughts, new windows popping up on our screen and never ending search suggestions describe the creation as well as the perception of this work. From a digital mess of public and hidden images, Fürnkäs artificially creates one version of collective past, present and future. With Mnemonic she exceeds the roll of the observer and joins the game of harmfully harmless iconoclasm and propaganda.

- Text by Lucy Degens

*Machtsymbole
Unterwandern von
Macht
Spiel mit Masken
Schutzmechanismen
Doppelmoral
Gegenwehr
Todestanz
Freiheitssymbolik
Strukturelle Subversion
Erinnerung
Bilderflut*

*Symbols of power
Subversion of power
Masks & disguises
Protective mechanisms
Double standards
Resistance
Death dance
Memory & reminiscence
Imprisonment
Structural dualisms
Flood of images
Freedom metaphors
Recollection*

Mnemonic, 2021
Digital print on PVC
190 x 240cm



Installation view
In Abeyance, Gewölbe, project space of Art Cologne (2021)
 invited by Johannes Wohnseifer, David Ostrowski & Michail Pirgelis



VICE VERSA REVERSED Video installation with performance

"hi. how are you?" - " i don't know" - " oh. what's up? do you want to talk about it?" — a bed — a body — a voice — a stream of countless fluttering images. Imminently before we fall asleep, we seem to take a bath in a flood of visual memories, passing thoughts, remote feelings and emotions. The bed becomes a fragile threshold, an interspace between the subconscious and conscious reflection. Images function as archived fragments of a distant (yet close) time and place, carried into sleep by our minds and glowing social devices. What characterises the perceptible tension of being in-between in this very moment of intimacy and solitude?

With their multi-media installation *Vice Versa Reversed* (2021), Isabella Färnkäs and Jasmin Truong raise questions about inner surveillance and the continuous re-reconstruction of encounters, memories and narratives through new technologies and media devices in intimate, self-created spaces: Two flat screens are framing a big white bed with a colourful patchwork blanket and a performer interacting with a phone and wearing a patchwork pyjama made from the same material as the bed-cover, creating a familiar yet strange atmosphere. The patchwork fabric of the pyjama and the blanket visually connect with the overlapping, scattered moving images on the video screens, that seem intangible — a cross-over of the haptic and the corporal alongside the virtual. While the performer, who is constantly moving on the bed, consumes their own "infotainment" before falling asleep, both body and mind are constantly being suffused with internal and external stimuli. They seem permeable. Even though, they do not look uncomfortable surrounded by the passing multi-channel-videos, the installation appears as a situation with no way out, symbolising a self-constructed net of mutual dependence in social networks and virtual relationships. Especially the recurring voices — invisible, non-corporal counterparts of the performer — creating a dialogue between the two flickering screens, remain far off but too persistent and contribute to the ambivalent scenery that casts doubt on ideas of freedom and autonomy in modern societies today. Referring to connotations of the prevailing dualism fe-/male, the two voices can be read as male (active) and female (passive), representing the inter-play of dominant gender constructs in contrast to the silent, visual and androgynous embodiment of their subconscious processing by the performing body. "come. trust me. you can trust me" - "I'm confused" - " why?" - " i'm not sure".

- Text by Anna K. Wlach

Vice Versa Reversed, 2021

Two-channel video installation, mattress, two 40" flatscreens

Patchwork quilt 2x2m and patchwork-pyjama made from recycled jersey-shirts

Video 22 min each, color/sound, loop

Dialogue spoken by Juan Antonio Olivares and Ewouyne Waller

Durational performance on July 23-25th 2021, 4-9 pm, 2-7 pm & 1-6 pm, with Marlene Kollender



Installation view
Vice Versa Reversed, 2021
Strike A Pose, K21 Kunstsammlung NRW, Düsseldorf (2021)

(continued)

Vice Versa Reversed (2021) by Isabella Fürnkäs and Jasmin Truong depicts the corporal and sensual experience right in the middle of the digital dimension. Performed for the first time at Strike a Pose at the K21 Kunstsammlung NRW directly next to Julia Scher's „Surveillance Bed III“ installation from 1994, the interdisciplinary art work focusses on the contemporary overlapping and fragmented relations of time and space that culminate in the intimate sphere of the individual. The side-by-side of the installation next to Julia Scher's, which has been created in very different period of time, appears to be an interesting combination: While Julia Scher's work of the 1990s deals with the ubiquitous surveillance from the outside, Isabella Fürnkäs and Jasmin Truong locate a new level of self-monitoring in the supervision of our time. Materiality and intimacy, narration formats and circular clouds enter into relation with each other and meet a pouring and perspective-building layering of imagery in the constructed video-works. With this multi-media installation, the artistic duo takes up the fragmented in an interdisciplinary way and reflects on narrative factors that come together to form a whole.

- Text by Anna K. Wlach



Vice Versa Reversed (video stills), 2021
Two-channel video installation, mattress, two 40" flatscreens
Video 22 min each, color/sound, loop



Installation view
Vice Versa Reversed, 2021
Strike A Pose, K21 Kunstsammlung NRW, Düsseldorf (2021)



UNPREDICTABLE LIARS REVOLT Sound installation

In the age of full-blown consumerism and ideological inertia, individual identity is primarily communicated through labels with which an imagined self is positioned and valorised. The different needs and constraints result in a patchwork of veiling self-dramatisation, an anomythic hide-and-seek game of surfaces in which analogue and virtual individuals threaten to collapse. The complexity and diversity of semiotic references form a cross-milieu system that can no longer be penetrated individually and leaves its bearers behind. In the context of the sound collage, the voices of the latter - once the medium with which self-image and self-assurance were communicated - become a barely perceptible whispering, speaking and singing, which at the same time invites direct sensory experience as a stream of consciousness and negotiates questions of role-playing, isolation, interpersonal communication and social co-existence.

"Human-like figures, magnificently draped in colours and patterns, nourished by their engagement with Japanese theatre and arts and crafts; with the appearance of having grown out of painting, populate spaces and, in a limp, melting state, pour colourfully across the floor, becoming drawing again." - Andreas Reihse

The main impulse for the first version of the installation Unpredictable Liars (2017) comes inspired by Japanese Nō theatre, which already has inherent loss of the individual through the use of centuries-old symbols. Another version was formed in 2018-19 with the series Unpredictable Liars II, where the ghostly transhuman characters seem like the last survivors of a utopia. In the new series Unpredictable Liars Revolt (2021), the figures have been encased in epoxy, which further emphasises the congealed character of their disguise, devoid of meaning and stripped of interhumanity.

- Text by Matthias Jakob Becker

Listen to the sound: <https://soundcloud.com/isabella-f-rnk-s/unpredictable-liars>

Exhibition list

Folkwang Museum (2022), ARCO Madrid (2022), Orangerie Schloss Benrath (2022), Amtsalon (2021), Spoiler Berlin (2021), Berlin Masters (2021), HPP & Kunstverein 701 & Düsseldorf Palermo (2021)

Unpredictable Liars Revolt, 2021-2022

Sound installation, veiled mannequins, coated with epoxy, speakers, various materials and fabrics



Installation view
Unpredictable Liars Revolt,
HPP Architects, Kunstverein 701 & Düsseldorf Palermo (2021)



Installation view
Hua International, ARCO Madrid (2022)



Installation view
Hua International, ARCO Madrid (2022)



Installation view
Hua International, ARCO Madrid (2022)

Text excerpt from the sound installation

Your lips
 Are licking
 My inner ego We are walking On this Emotional
 tightrope Elegantly Silently Pleasantly
 Unconsciously You are Beside me
 But your fingers Can't reach
 Or feel
 At all
 You're pushing me Punishing me With this
 Versatile flexibility Hidden in your legs Solely
 watching Me while I tremble I tell you
 That I forgot You won't believe
 I say it
 Again and Again and Again.
 Your Hands Linger on my Innocent Itchy Devious
 Yet fragile Fractured Elbows.
 Hhhmmmmm Hhhmmmmm
 Why
 Did you put Body-lotion
 On my wounds Yesterday?
 It's your Cheeky chesty Puberty pimples That
 have intimidated Me in my Empty lingerie,
 Leaning
 In the hallway And these precious Prosperous
 Rooms of yours Appear
 like Copious claws. Come, Please, Scratch my
 eyes.

Installation view
 Berlin Masters 2021,
 Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin (2021)





In addition to the figure in the Art Factors shop window, there are other figures by Isabella Fürnkäs scattered among the shop displays on the way towards Viehofer Platz. Wherever they appear, they either counteract or imperceptibly blend into the shop window and the world of commodities being showcased in it. Whether at the bridal store; the fetish shop; or Enza Home, a bed retailer whose upper level houses a private Turkish jazz club; Fürnkäs' transhuman figures comment on the window displays in their ambivalent constitution between gender roles and queerness, dystopia and fashion fetishism, drawing shoppers' focus to the interplay of intimacy and publicity, belief and conviction, vision and "naked reality".

- Text by Markus Ambach

Installation view
Folkwang und die Stadt,
 Museum Folkwang, Essen (2022)



They are encased in epoxy, which further emphasizes the frozen character of their veiling, which is devoid of meaning and torn from the interpersonal. The sound coming from the figures, is a barely perceptible whispering, speaking and singing. As a stream of consciousness, it becomes a sensory experience to the listener and negotiates questions of role play, isolation, interpersonal communication and social co-existence.

- Text by Gilles Neiens

Installation view
Folkwang und die Stadt,
Museum Folkwang, Essen (2022)

THE DESIRING MACHINES

Sound installation

The Desiring Machines is a sound installation that consists of 220 individually hand-blown glass droplets suspended from a mesh net across the ceiling within a two-channel immersive audio soundscape. Each glass drop is unique and offset in its own way, some with streams of deep red ruby glass inside them. Entering the room activates the sound level of the installation, which creates this dialog with the viewer that the title suggests, we are inside a web of desire. The artist writes "The glass bodies, composed like fixed movement in space, give the impression of a social fabric. Everything is interwoven, everything flows". The viewer is enveloped in the soundscape based on excerpts from the publication *Anti-Oedipus* (1977) by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. An intentionally hypnotic and difficult to follow text on the "healthy" and "schizophrenic" people in capitalist society - it is unclear who is who.

A lyrical arc of the work spans tells how productive desire can be, how desire bridges gaps and is a force of creation. Attentive observation reveals engravings in some drops - words in which overriding values, longings and desires crystallize literally onto glass. A kind of journey through the human body begins, from its needs and processes to the mundane circulation of bodily fluids. The red hue of some drops can evoke associations with blood but also other connotations of red, a signifier of passion, like glass, something fragile or frozen as if a manifested snapshot, a frozen state of the fluid, the ephemeral, the intangible.

- Text by Elke Kania

Listen to the sound: <https://soundcloud.com/isabella-f-rnk-s/the-desiring-machines>

Exhibition list

No Tears for the Monsters of the Night. No Tears., Kultur Kiosk, Stuttgart (2023),

In Flagranti, Museum Schloss Moyland, Kleve (2022),

Paradise Libraries, Clages, Cologne (2020),

You Are Here, Kunsthau NRW, curated by Elke Kania (2020)

*This work is in the permanent collection of the Kunsthau NRW.

The Desiring Machines, 2020

Sound installation, 220 individual hanging glass drops, net

Background sound by Aphex Twin (10min/loop), text spoken by Moira Barrett

Photos by Carl Brunn





Installation view
You Are Here,
Kunsthau NRW Kornelimünster (2020)



The Desiring Machines, 2020
Sound installation, 220 individual hanging glass drops, net
Background sound by Aphex Twin (10min/loop), text spoken by Moira Barrett
Photos by Carl Brunn

THE DESIRING MACHINESSound installation, text spoken by Moira Barrett (10min/loop)*It breathes, it heats, it eats. A breath of fresh air, a relationship with the outside world.**Everything is a machine. Celestial machines, the stars or rainbows in the sky, alpine machines— all of them connected to those of his body.**There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together. Producing-machines, schizophrenic machines, all of species life: the self and the non-self, outside and inside, desiring-machines everywhere.**The glaring, sober truth that resides in delirium, is that there is no such thing as relatively independent spheres or circuits. Everything is connected.**And everything is production: productions of recording processes, productions of consumptions, of sensual pleasures, of anxieties, and of pain.**The soul and body ultimately perish. Schizophrenia is like love: there is no specifically schizophrenic phenomenon or entity; schizophrenia is the universe of productive and re-productive desiring-machines.**A machine is always coupled with another. The productive synthesis is inherently connective in nature.**Desire constantly couples continuous flows and partial objects that are by nature fragmentary and fragmented.**Desire causes the current to flow, itself flows in turn, and breaks the flows.**Everything that flows is adoration, even the menstrual flow that carries away the seed unfecund. Amniotic fluid spilling out of the sac and kidney stones; flowing hair; a flow of spittle, a flow of sperm, shit, urine.**Every object presupposes the continuity of a flow; every flow, the fragmentation of the object. The organ-machine interprets the entire world from the perspective of its flux.**Doubtless, the eye interprets everything—speaking, understanding, shitting, fucking—in terms of seeing.**The ability to rearrange fragments continually in new and different patterns or configurations is inherent to all Desiring-machines.**What would be required, is a pure fluid in a free state, streaming over the surface of a full body.**Desiring-machines make us a universal organism. But at the very heart the body suffers from being organized in this way, from not having some other sort of organization, or even, no organization at all.**1, 2, 1, 2, . . .
1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1. . .**Desire desires death also, because the full body of death is its motor, just as it desires life.**The body is the body. It is all by itself. The body is never a sole organism. And organisms are the enemies of the body.**Merely so many nails piercing the flesh, so many forms of torture. In order to resist the body presents its smooth, slippery, opaque, taut surface as a barrier. In order to resist linked, connected, and interrupted flows, it sets up a counterflow of amorphous, undifferentiated fluid.**Machines attach themselves to the body without organs, as so many points of disjunction. An entire network of new syntheses is now woven, marking the surface off into co-ordinates, like a grid.**It is in repetition and by repetition that forgetting becomes a positive power. While the unconscious becomes a positive and superior unconscious.**The infinite which belongs to a single time, the eternity which belongs to an instant, the unconscious which belongs to consciousness.**It is a question of making movement itself a work, without interposition; of substituting direct signs for mediate representations; of inventing vibrations, rotations, whirlings, gravitations, dances or leaps which directly touch the mind.**Repetition is the thought of the future.
And even suffering, as Marx says, is a form of self-enjoyment.*



The Desiring Machines, 2020
Sound installation, 220 individual hanging glass drops, net
Background sound by Aphex Twin (10min/loop), text spoken by Moira Barrett
Photos by Carl Brunn

THE HANGING GARDENS OF BABYLON Installation

Olga Cerkasova und Isabella Fürnkäs work interdisciplinary and with a variety of media such as performance, installation, drawing and video. Both artists thematically question the body and it's cultural identity and fluid interconnectivity through their work. Olga Cerkasova creates paintings and sculptures that reveal hidden and delicate desires in site-specific installations in the space. Isabella Fürnkäs plays with the intersections of the multiplicity of identities and reflects subversive notions of self-perception.

Together they initiated a specific dialogue between their works while collaborating for the first time. The studio exhibition contains sculptural details made of plaster, sand and re-mastered ready made that contextually engage with the oil paintings. The paintings blur the boundaries between painting and sculpture. The hanging cut-outs made of jute mark a fluidity and fragility which can also be observed in the small sized drawings. The artists worked site specifically and also included materials found through in their cultural research while being in Mexico City.

- Press text from *Sandstorms, Lagos Mexico City (2020)*

Exhibition list

(In)definitively, Goeben, Berlin (2020),
Sensus presents: Light & Dark, Monom-sound, Funkhaus, Berlin, curated by Georgina Pope (2020),
Sandstorms (studio exhibition with Olga Cerkasova), Lagos Mexico City (2020)

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon, 2020
Two pieces, jute, acrylic spray, metal strings
Each 1 x 2m





Installation view
(In)definitively,
Goeben, Berlin (2020)



Installation view
Sandstorms, studio exhibition with Olga Cerkasova,
Lagos Mexico City (2020)

BLIND LAND

Sound installation with performance

A black pool appears in contrast to two performers dressed all in white. 6 sound showers play a sound scape from above, in which the voices of the performers monologuing and dialoguing are mingled in. The performers move stoically synchronous, imitating each other, responding with eye contact only. Like living sculptures they progressively move on the borders of the pool to finally dive into the basin. The process ranges between hesitation, fear and playfulness. The water is approached like an element of the unknown, with which the performers interact, treating it like a fluid opponent. They pour black color into the pool to dye the water and themselves. The procedure reveals an immersive character of humans assimilating and disappearing in their surroundings, becoming willingly or unwillingly part of an alienated context. The work examines transgression, alienation and immersion. It is a bleak reflection on modern-day identity and isolation, both in a technological and social dimension.

- Text by Maximilian Steinborn

Watch video statement: <https://youtu.be/ZIYxs5P6p8c>

Listen to the sound: <https://soundcloud.com/isabella-f-rnk-s/blind-land>

Blind Land, 2018

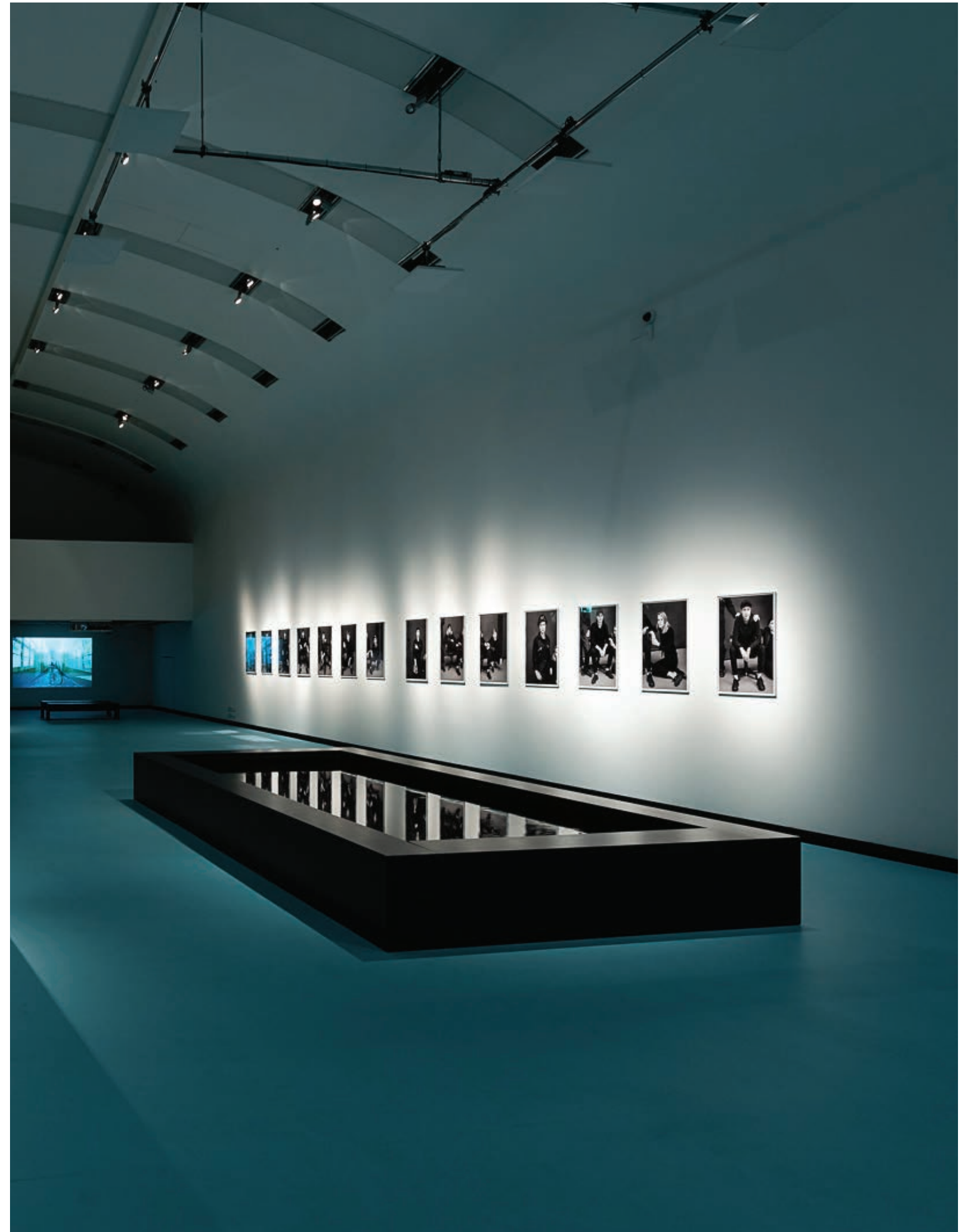
Sound installation (13min/loop), 6 sound showers, basin with black water, 6 x 3m

Durational performance (approx. 50min) on October 24th 2018, 8 pm

Performance with Marlene Kollender and Steven Sander

Photo by Jorit Aust, photos of the performance by Lorenz Seidler

Photographs on the backside wall by Andrzej Steinbach





Installation view
Antarctica. An Exhibition on Alienation,
 Kunsthalle Wien, curated by Nicolaus Schafhausen & Vanessa Joan Müller (2018)



Installation view
Antarctica. An Exhibition on Alienation,
Curated by Nicolaus Schafhausen & Vanessa Joan Müller, Kunsthalle Wien (2018)



„I am in the world. A world without time. My consciousness now is light and it is air. Air has neither a place nor time. Air is the non-place where everything will exist. What I am saying is the music of the air. The formation of the world. Slowly what will be approaches. What will be already is. The future is what always existed and always will exist. What I am saying to you is not for listening - it's for being.“

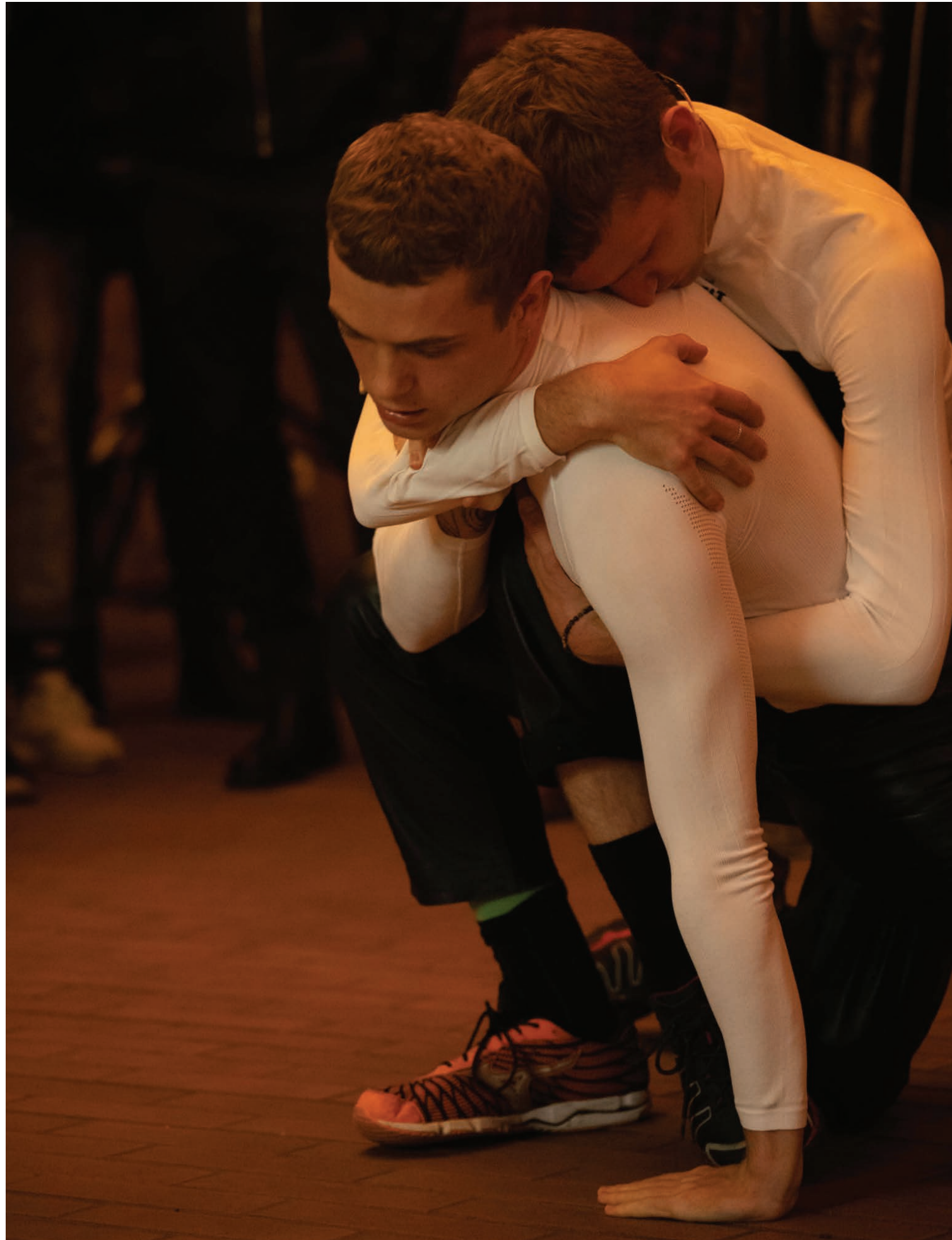
- Text sung during the performance by Marlene Kollender



Installation view
Antarctica. An Exhibition on Alienation,
Curated by Nicolaus Schafhausen & Vanessa Joan Müller, Kunsthalle Wien (2018)



Installation view
Antarctica. An Exhibition on Alienation,
Curated by Nicolaus Schafhausen & Vanessa Joan Müller, Kunsthalle Wien (2018)



THE BOOMERANG EFFECT Performance

In the long run, repetition and unison either lead to lethargy or provoke – sometimes even active – resistance. In communication theory, the latter is described as the “boomerang effect”. The term boomerang effect refers to the unintentional turn of a communication strategy by 180 degrees. The attempt to influence a communication partner has the opposite result. Despite (or because of) the objections and counterarguments, they feel more convinced by their opinion, plan or suspicion than before the attempted persuasion. In economic psychology, poorly launched advertising campaigns are plainly described as having a boomerang effect. Instead of increasing the recipient's buying interest, the additional advertising leads to aversion and anger. The client must fear that the promoted product might not only reduce purchasing but even inspire deliberate boycotting. The Boomerang Effect can mark the beginning of a revolt.

Fürnkäs's eponymous performance contains an entire series of boomerang effects. A split ego in conversation with itself; a chain of half expressed demands and questions, which, once uttered, turn against their originator. Sometimes they spontaneously merge with a pop song quote, sometimes they get lost in Dadaesque listings. Fürnkäs's performers, both men, both white, both blond doppelgangers, try in vain to join the two halves of their monologue to form a whole. The moments of sense and connection are, however, mainly accidental. Then: a turn of events. The two men no longer have the stage to themselves when two women in the audience speak up. Using the same staccato as their precursors they bring the conversation to a preliminary conclusion. “Just continue to dissolve my personality,” are the laconic last words of a consciousness that sees itself disappearing. It remains unclear whether it is witnessing its end or its liberation.

- Text by Maximilian Steinborn

Watch the video here: <https://youtu.be/vef2CqZkSKo>

Exhibition list

The Boomerang Effect, Salon ACME, Mexico City (2020),
Antarctica. An Exhibition on Alienation, Kunsthalle Wien, Austria (2018),
The Boomerang Effect, Kölner Kunstverein (2018),
The Way Things Go Part III: Wage, PS120, Berlin (2018),
Ars Viva Prize Finals, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2018)

The Boomerang Effect, 2018

Performance with Nikolas Brummer and Jan Seevetal (approx. 10min), on October 24th 2018, 7pm
Photos by Lorenz Seidler



Installation view
Antarctica. An Exhibition on Alienation,
Curated by Nicolaus Schafhausen & Vanessa Joan Müller, Kunststhal Wien (2018)

Text excerpt from the performance

<i>my corporate</i>	
<i>I treat you</i>	<i>cannibal</i>
<i>animal</i>	<i>like an</i>
<i>hannibal</i>	<i>like a</i>
<i>clown</i>	<i>like a</i>
<i>while I</i>	<i>excuse me</i>
<i>guy</i>	<i>kiss this</i>
<i>you are a</i>	<i>the hidden lies</i>
<i>in the sky</i>	<i>glass box</i>
<i>in the world</i>	<i>the most natural thing</i>
<i>a mother planet</i>	<i>the I and I</i>
<i>my corporate</i>	<i>my battleship earth</i>
<i>pray for me</i>	<i>cannibal</i>
<i>like me</i>	<i>the chosen few</i>
<i>we are</i>	<i>and you</i>
<i>of your</i>	<i>slaves to the rhythm</i>
<i>prison</i>	<i>corporate</i>
<i>I can't</i>	<i>pray for me</i>
<i>enough</i>	<i>get</i>
<i>I don't want</i>	<i>what you need</i>
	<i>..</i>





In the two-part performance *The Boomerang Effect* (2018), which she presents as part of the series *Aus- & Vortragen* curated by Juliane Duft, communication sounds as if it were echoing back from the facades of words. One can sense human desire and emotional fragility behind them in the same way they are also revealed in Fűrnkäs' other works.

With her art, Isabella Fűrnkäs attempts to build a bridge between the manifestations of the digital age and that of the supposedly old world in which physicality still plays a role. In drawings, collages, performances, video works, and installations, she exposes the present day as a confusing thicket of surfaces that can hardly be penetrated as ever more layers open up. In her delicate coffee stain watercolors, for example, skin-colored faces appear like masks behind which is something unclear – *Hide & Seek*. Ultimately, what's often concealed behind all of these layers is nothingness.

- Text by Juliane Duft

Watch the video here: <https://vimeo.com/275774566>

The Boomerang Effect, 2018

Performance with Nikolas Brummer, Jan Seevetal, Cristiana Cott Negroesco and Isabella Fűrnkäs, approx. 10min, on June 13th 2018, 7pm

Photos by Verena Maas



Installation view
Aus- & Vortragen,
Kölischer Kunstverein, Cologne (2018)



UNPREDICTABLE LIARS Sound installation

Mysterious veiled figures linger in the exhibition space; they could be from past decades or maybe the distant future. Mumbling under their cloak, they tell the story of *The Raft of the Medusa*, an oratorio by the German composer Hans Werner Henze, the tale of the French frigate *Meduse*, which ran aground off the west coast of Africa in 1816. Some castaways saved themselves on a raft, but in the end only fifteen of the hundred and fifty mariners survived. Translated through sculpture, a story of desperation, existential crisis and cannibalism unfolds. While Hans Werner Henze's oratorio originated against the backdrop of left-wing thought in the 1960s, Fürnkäs' work situates itself very specifically in the context of contemporary economics, referencing isolation and the struggle for survival.

- Text excerpt by Marian Stindt

For a long time, the self-portrait was regarded as a mirror of historical and social changes with the individual self in the foreground, until it acquired new levels of meaning from the 1960s onwards through increased critical questioning of its topicality. Artists went to physical extremes, put themselves in the place of others in an attempt to explore the Other, and gender roles were questioned through masquerades or role-playing. The self-portrait is replaced by self-staging - in the digital age supposedly more than ever in ways of a selfie - or in other words, the self is the opposite. Under the title *Selbtsicht: Porträt-Identitäten* (Self-view: Portrait Identities), the Sprengel Museum Hannover is now dedicating an exhibition to the artistic questioning of the self-portrait genre from the 1960s to the present day.

Focusing on media art, Fürnkäs explores the self-perception through a confrontation with aspects of isolation and denial in direct communication. In contrast to Fürnkäs, Öffler's work seeks contact with other people on the Internet, which is refused after he has revealed his true "self" as an artist. All in all, the field of tension between the artistic creative process and self-observation is dealt with. Observing oneself is a subjective, an almost intimate factor. The conditions, premises and intentions are therefore always individual and variable.

- Text by Olga Nevzorova

Listen to the sound: <https://soundcloud.com/isabella-f-rnk-s/unpredictable-liars>

Exhibition list

KINDL - Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2020), ACCCE, Berlin (2020), Sprengel Museum (2019), Kunstverein Göttingen (2019), KIT (2018), Italic (2018), Markus Ambach Projects (2018), Meetfactory Prague (2018), Clages (2017)

Unpredictable Liars, 2018-2019

Sound installation, 15 veiled mannequins, speakers, various materials and fabrics
Photos by Ivo Farber and Martin Plüddemann



Installation view
Words don't come easy,
KIT, Düsseldorf (2018)



Installation view
Words don't come easy,
KIT, Düsseldorf (2018)



Installation view
Words don't come easy, KIT, Düsseldorf (2018)



Installation view
The Loop
Italic, Berlin (2018)



Text excerpt from the sound installation

In the absence of real stability there is still the possibility of true solidarity, the experience of "having adventures and being in the impasse together, waiting for the other shoe to drop. And also, allowing for some healing and resting, waiting for it not to drop.

I was beset by anxiety. I could have cried out with terror at being lost.

I pushed the fear away—by studying the sky, determining when the moon would come out. I saw myself in relationship to the stars.

Your lips are licking my inner ego.

We are walking on this emotional tightrope: elegantly, silently, pleasantly, unconsciously. You are beside me but your fingers can't reach or feel at all.

You're pushing me, punishing me with this versatile flexibility hidden in your legs solely watching me while I tremble. I tell you that I forgot you won't believe.

I say it again and again and again. Your hands linger on my innocent, itchy, devious, yet fragile, fractured elbows.

Pay attention. I'm inviting you to a new kingdom.

I'm hiding myself away. I have to hide, otherwise I will be trapped by the eye of the other.

....

Installation view
Selbstsicht - Portrait-Identitäten
Sprengel Museum Hannover (2019)



Installation view
For Better Or Worse,
Kunstverein Göttingen (2019)



The exhibition *For Better Or Worse*, explores how contemporary artists with an affinity for the Internet express themes of friendship, love and togetherness, and aims to critically question current developments and stereotypes while emphasizing potentials for social coexistence. A multi-part sound installation by the artist Isabella Färnkäs embodies the gaps that arise when feelings of isolation and separation are nurtured despite interpersonal encounter and interaction. The increasing ambivalence of distance and closeness, as well as reality and fiction in the digital age, become apparent.

The sculptures in Isabella Färnkäs' multi-part sound installation *Unpredictable Liars* (2018/19), distributed throughout the room, emanate a whisper that is difficult to understand. The variously sized figures are wrapped in different colored and multi-layered dresses and decorated with chains and ropes. They form a loose group, whose attitude towards each other is uninspired, bored, distant, and faltering. The only viable cohesion between them seems to be the common space. Inspired by Théodore Géricault's painting *Floß der Medusa* (1819), which shows the struggle for survival of shipwrecked people, Färnkäs transfers a basic mood of alienation and social isolation as symptoms of our time: they communicate less, trust their counterpart less, and feel more alienated from others and trapped in a loop from which no way out is shown. This circular movement also appears in a series of small-format drawings. Individual body parts and gestures are recognizable between otherwise mainly curved forms.

- Text by Daniela Seitz

Installation view
For Better Or Worse,
 Kunstverein Göttingen (2019)

TOO EASY(TO DIE) Video installation

In her work, Isabella Fürnkäs combines digital and archaic media and negotiates topics such as isolation, corporeality and communication structures. Her piece Too Easy To Die demonstrates this approach: At the beginning of the video we see the movements of an ant street and those of a rave. Two different forms of group organization. The prevailing efficiency within the ant colony and the group structure of the dancing crowd are structurally similar. One can also observe the uniform step of a young woman and waves that hit a beach, or the constellation of shells and sparkling eye make-up. The formal similarities are not contradictory. The natural, the synthetic and the human seem to be able to ecstatically co-exist side by side.

In her series Wounded – from which she also shows a work at Bärenzwinger – Fürnkäs uses goatskin as a medium, which is connected with small objects or written onto. The physical presence of the skin, which once served as a form of parchment, seems prehistoric and brutal in its new function, as well as vulnerable and with a perceptible appreciation of the material.

- Text by Jan Tappe

Exhibition list

Showroom, Hua International, Berlin (2021),
Fictional Nature, Bärenzwinger, Berlin, curated by Jan Tappe & Evelyn Gregl (2019),
Face my boost by your ShotSpotter, Basel Hardstrasse, Switzerland (2018)

Too Easy (To Die), 2018

Video installation, flatscreen 40", kinetic sand, velvet, lace, drawing on plexiglas

Video 3:30min, color/sound, loop

Photos by Trevor Llyod and Marcel Hiller





Installation view
Face my boost by your ShotSpotter,
Basel Hardstrasse (2018)



Too Easy(To Die) (video stills), 2018
Video installation, flatscreen 40", kinetic sand, velvet, lace, drawing on plexiglas
Video 3:30min, color/sound, loop

METAMORPHOSES OF CONTROL Solo exhibition

Osthaus Museum, Hagen

07.07 - 05.08.2018

Curated by Ihsan Alisan

The interdisciplinary exhibition and performance project *Metamorphoses of Control* by Isabella Fürnkäs shows existential conditions in the digital age with epoch-transcending references. An installation with videos, drawings and as central element an immersive performance based on the painting *Raft of the Medusa* by Théodore Géricault (1818/1819), that opens up a dialogue in relation to the interior of the Museum by Henry van de Velde.

Compared to Géricault's visually loaded and emotional drama, this scene looks like a vision of transhuman reality. Imagery of a technoid raft with isolated and partly unrecognizable individuals appear, whose struggle for survival takes place in the immateriality of the mind. The four performers form monologues and dialogues that are repeated in loops over the course of 3 hours. The boundaries between the performers, the island landscape and the spectators are blurred and the spectators witness the exhibited individuals like voyeurs. The question of the representation of pain and suffering arises in comparison to Géricault's painting. The performative installation resembles a *tableau vivant* and negotiates questions on transcendence, role-play and immateriality.

The things that subconsciousness desires are not necessarily good. - Joseph Murphy

- Text by Ihsan Alisan

*The project is generously funded by the Kunststiftung NRW

Watch the video here: <https://vimeo.com/728262145>

See the full catalogue here: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/clnt0w1ie4wc01b/MOC.pdf?dl=0>

The Raft of the Medusa, 2018

Durational performance with 4 performers (approx. 180min) on July 6th 2018, 6 - 9 pm

Performance with Cristiana Cott Negoescu, Marlene Kollender, Steven Sander, Idan Micha Weiss

2-channel video projection on white tiled platform, sound, kinetic sand, clay masks, 2 x 4 m

Photos of the performance by Moritz Krauth

Photos of the installation by Martin Plüddemann

Video documentation by Bart vd Zwaan

Texts in the catalogue by: Dr. Tayfun Belgin, Ihsan Alisan, Juliane Duft, Mascha Jacobs, Prof. Dr. Josef Fürnkäs, Jil Blume





Installation view
Metamorphoses of Control,
Osthaus Museum, Hagen (2018)



Installation view
Metamorphoses of Control,
Osthaus Museum, Hagen (2018)



Installation view
Metamorphoses of Control,
Osthaus Museum, Hagen (2018)



The Raft of the Medusa by Théodore Géricault has inscribed itself in the DNA of 19th century painting and French cultural-historical identity. The large-scale tragedy unfolding before the viewer's eyes is an attempt at a historical narrative that has subsequently been interpreted, discussed, and attacked in the context of various political discourses critical of power.

However, the fact that the painting itself was created for the Paris Salon, which historically marked a new accessibility of art, especially for the bourgeoisie, is equally important and opens up a connection to the present: in the Salon, the competition between the paintings and their resulting transformation becomes clear when we view the halls in dense Petersburg hanging. The salon thus becomes a model design of the post-digital "flood of images" - one more reason to consider the raft as a symbol of the present as well.

In such an early inflationary image culture of the Salon, the provocation of scandals was part of a strategy of the painters to make themselves visible in this system. Already here, artists resorted to provocations "in the framework" - a drooping girder, a nude woman who was not an allegory, or even the Raft of the Medusa, through which Géricault hoped for a scandal, which, however, immediately failed to materialize.

The cultural history of the image is extensive - poetically as well as musically, it is only Géricault's pictorial narration that gives rise to the historical memory of the castaways of the Medusa.

Most recently, I came across a video installation that is an artistic documentation of a performance by contemporary German-French artist Isabella Fűrnkäs. The title *Metamorphoses of Control* is open in many ways, definitely it can come to effect in the radical upheavals of digitalization - to which I will invariably return.

Performers sit on a luminous plateau, there are few props like smartphones, masks and sand. The performers, dressed in white, wear a plastic sheath around their white clothes. They move slowly, pushing the sand back and forth, moving their smartphones. Fűrnkäs rarely performs herself in her performances, she uses the principle of "staged performance" - just as for Géricault, for example, the raft becomes the stage for his personal narrative of tragedy, we cannot avoid reading Fűrnkäs' *Plateau* as the stage of a stagnant tragedy of the post-digital individual.

So if all of life becomes survival, then we are also constantly on a sinking raft, which is also typical of contemporary loss of utopia, collective depression in flickering fade-out and fade-in of approaching challenges to humanity, such as coping with climate change in a structure of global inequality and accompanying excessive destruction through capital processes. [...]

- Text excerpt by Donatella Demuth, published on aphoticsignals.net



“Raft of the Medusa” (Screen play, excerpt)

Marlene in front, Idan behind her, Cristiana behind him, Steven behind her, positions change while speaking.

Videos shimmer, soft noise, everyone wears the masks in front of their faces, holds the iPhones / tablets, motionless.

Marlene sings.

(Cristiana)
It's just these nervous hands
Forgotten flesh that lost control
To the rescue..
Police ! Police !

(Steven)
If I gave you a gun
Would you blow me away?

(all)
Eye to eye Eye to eye Eye to eye Eye to eye Eye to eye
Eye to eye
(Idan)

Silence is only quiet for those who hear.

(Cristiana)
I am in the world. A world without time.
My consciousness now is light and it is air. Air has neither a place nor time. Air is the non-place where everything will exist. What I am saying is the music of the air. The formation of the world. Slowly what will be approaches. What will be already is. The future is what always existed and always will exist. What I am saying to you is not for listening - it's for being.

(Idan)
This Isolation
Is like an oxygen mask
With a hint of pink
and a touch of blue



(Marlene sings)
Prey, prey, prey, prey, prey,
prey, prey, prey

(Steven)
This passiveness
(Idan)
Makes my soul
(Steven)
Want to scream
(Idan)
It irritates
(Steven)
It itches
(Idan)
I'm swimming
(Steven)
In my own consciousness
(Idan)
Searching for

(Steven)
A place
(Idan)
A time
(Steven)
An instant
(Idan)
To sleep
(Steven)
To rest
(Idan)
To die nicely.
(Steven)
No police.
(Idan)
No hierarchy.
(Steven)
No excuses.
Projections
(Steven)

No more
(Idan)
Cash to spend
(Steven)
On any account.

(Marlene)
Pretty pictures were
painted to be
destroyed.

(Steven)
Your
(Idan)
Personal jesus
(Steven)
Left me
(Idan)
Reach out
(Steven)



IN EKKLESIA Video installation

A crossover of hyperactivities: rapidly alternating images of nervous assembly robots and flickering impressions from a rave. Two constellations that could not be more different, a party and an assembly, both driven by the same beat, the same craving for repetition and perpetuity: slaves to the rhythm. In her video work *In Ekklesia* Isabella Fűrnkäs turns the archetype of democratic public life (in antiquity the ecclesia represented the core of Attic democracy) into a farce. Instead of an assembly of free, politically mature citizens eager to participate in discussion, Fűrnkäs presents an encounter between human and machine, both indulged in a mute dance of endless activity. The automation of production – the future of labour – continues with the automation of pleasure – the future of leisure. It's up to the viewer to determine whether politics still play a role in this scenario.

- Text excerpt by Maximilian Steinborn

Watch the video here: <https://vimeo.com/137166556>

Exhibition list

POST & Constant101, Arnheim, The Netherlands (2022), Critics' Pick: Rotterdam, Wien, Frankfurt, Blinkvideo (2019), Kunsthalle Wien (2018), KIT, Düsseldorf (2018), PS120, Berlin (2018), Millennium Monument Museum, Beijing (2017), NRW.Medienwerk / NRW Forum, Düsseldorf (2016), Kunstverein Mönchengladbach (2016), Nam June Paik Art Center Seoul (2016), Filmwerkstatt Düsseldorf (2015)

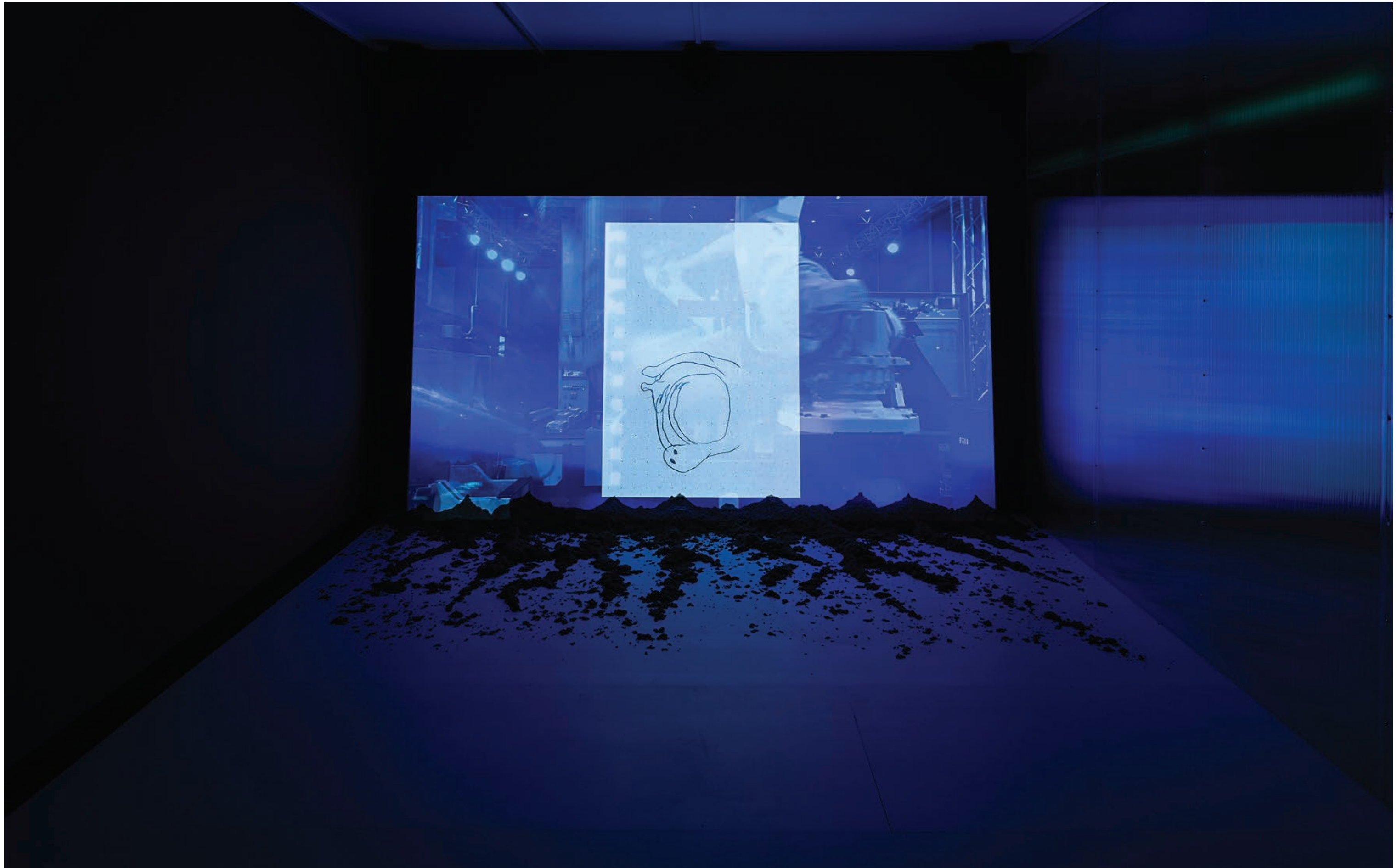
*This work is in the permanent collection of Ulsan Museum, South Korea.

In Ekklesia, 2015

Single-channel video installation, kinetic sand
Flatscreen 40" / Projection approx. 3 x 2.5m
Video 3:15min, color/sound, loop
Photos by Jorit Aust and Ivo Farber



Installation view
Words don't come easy,
KIT, Düsseldorf (2018)



Installation view
Antarctica. An Exhibition on Alienation,
 Kunsthalle Wien (2018)



Installation view
The Way Things Go,
PS120, Berlin (2018)



The title, In Ekklesia comes from the Greek word 'ecclesia,' which refers to the democratic parliament that served Athens in its halcyon days by being open to male citizens every other year. Solon, an Athenian legislator and a sage, allowed all citizens to serve the parliament regardless of their social class in BC 594. The Ecclesia made decisions about war, military strategies, and all judicial and administrative issues. This work satirizes various facets of humans and machines in the 21st century, unconsciously within a dystopian environment. Isabella Fürnkäs introduces a method of combining and overlaying countless images in her work, providing the new experience of sensations that act in ambiguous flows, movements, interference, and interjection. The piece is about the new metaphysical and material connections appearing through digital conversations that are divorced from the general notion of time and space, as well as isolation and alienation.

- Text by Hyun Jeung Kim

Installation view
Wrap around the time,
Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul (2016)

Isabella Färnkäs presents a dystopian techno-economic future where there is no space for human language or human labour. The video installation *In Ekklesia* (2015) offers a speculative vision of labour in the era of robotics. A projection screen, resting on a pile of kinetic sand, depicts industrial machines at work. Footage of different industrial machines and robots is interspersed with images of ballpoint pen drawings by Färnkäs, as well as documentation of rave culture. The mix of industrial imagery and party culture echo each other as the robotic movements seemingly move in time with the technoid sounds.

The growing automatisisation of unskilled labour leads to a rise in unemployment and work precarity. What started as the Fordist dream of a growing economy turned into a nightmare. Today, job insecurity, worklessness and financial instability preoccupy a generation of anxious and disassociated workers. Färnkäs grasps the discrepancy between intimacy and productivity, labour and leisure, between euphoria and anxiety by layering image, sound and lyric in this moving image installation. The fast images are interspersed by moments of stasis and dreariness.

"I am so sad"

"I am transparent"

"I am losing my language"

The loss of language the vocalist refers to here, invokes a loss of power and control. The kinetic sand, framing the projection screen, suggests the quicksand-like quality of a system that once it grabs you, won't let go. As Mark Fisher wrote, capitalism is "a monstrous, infinitely plastic entity, capable of metabolising and absorbing anything with which it comes into contact."¹

- Text by Marian Stindt

¹ Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*, Zero Books, London, 2009, p.6

Installation view

Wrap around the time,

Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul (2016)





INSOMNIA DRAWINGS

A private atlas of vulnerability and physical self-awareness build the eruptive drawings of Isabella Fürnkäs. Her picture medium, consisting of pages ripped out of sketchbooks, become fragile membranes, which convey the sensibility of the producer. The semi transparent, partially torn pages carry traces of coquetry and self-assertion and shimmer between absurd humour and vulnerability. Every gesture leads to an extreme. Fürnkäs' graphical monologue whirl addresses a counterpart which stays anonymous.

- Text excerpt by Katharina Klang

See more drawings:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3izhek8rrb1t0uz/AAAhEfN1isQefTTMBRbtK1nJa?dl=0>

Exhibition list

K60 Wilhelm Hallen Berlin (2022), Art Düsseldorf (2022), Schloss Benrath (2022), Arco Madrid (2022), Amtsalon Berlin (2021), Spoiler Berlin (2021), Hua International (2021), Windhager von Kaenel (2021), ACCCE (2020), Spendenaktion Mission Lifeline (2020), Goeben Berlin (2020), Lagos Mexico City (2020), Sprengel Museum (2019), Kunstverein Göttingen (2019), Art Cologne (2019), Art Los Angeles Contemporary (2019), ITALIC Berlin (2018), Osthaus Museum (2018), Philara Collection (2018), Gussglashalle Berlin (2018), KINDL - Centre for Contemporary Art, (2018), Auktion Neuer Aachener Kunstverein (2017), Art Berlin (2017), Bar Babette Berlin (2017), Clages (2017), Raiosha Gallery Tokyo (2016), Temporary Gallery (2016)

Insomnia Drawings, 2007-ongoing

Mixed media on paper, double-sided, 25,5 x 17,5 cm

Photos by Paul Schöpfer



Installation view
Insane in the membrane,
 *Selection of 30 drawings from 100 drawings in the Philara Collection (2019)



Installation view
Insane in the membrane,
 *Selection of 30 drawings from 100 drawings in the Philara Collection (2019)



Installation view
White Light,
 Raiocha Gallery, Tokyo (2016)

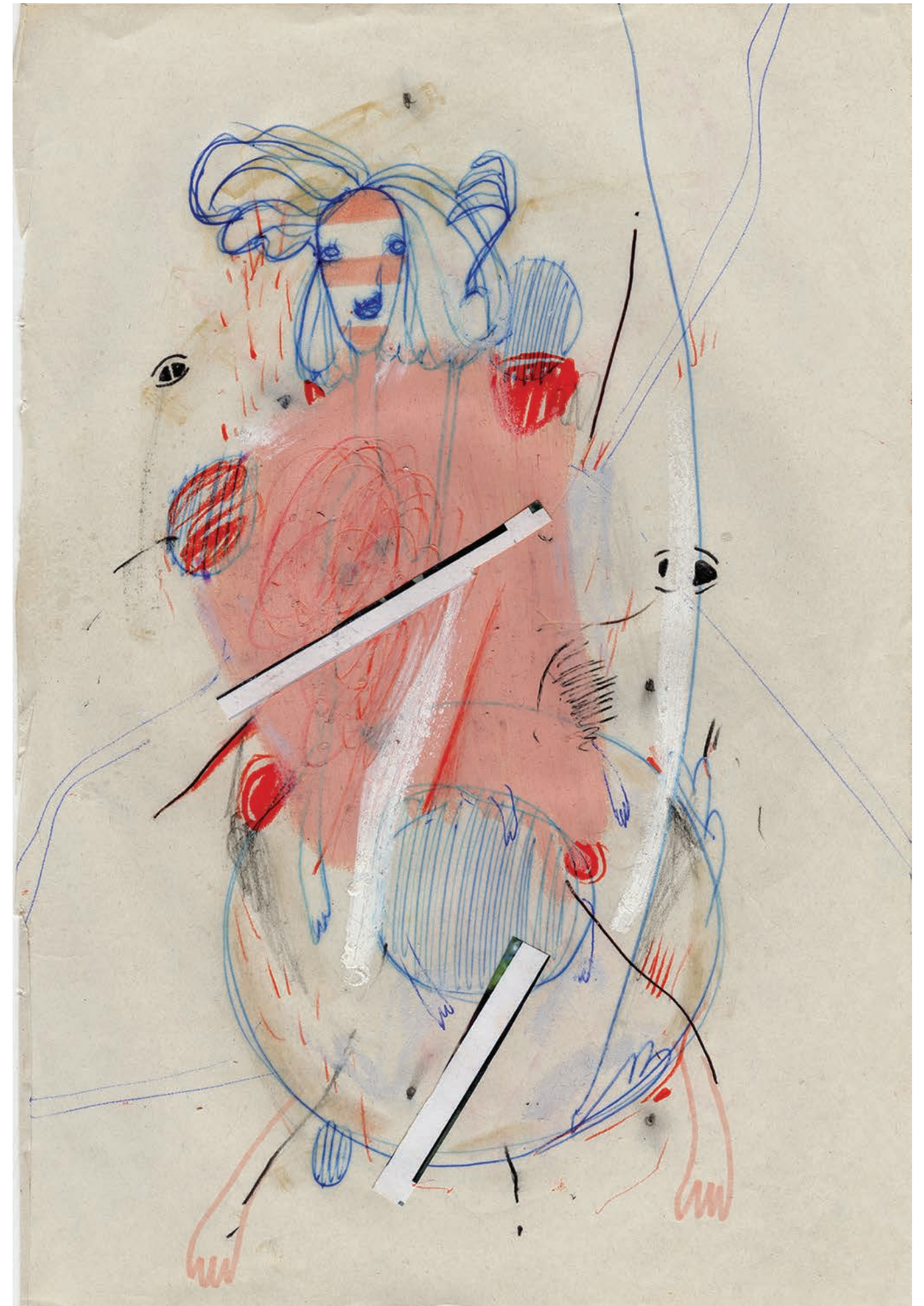


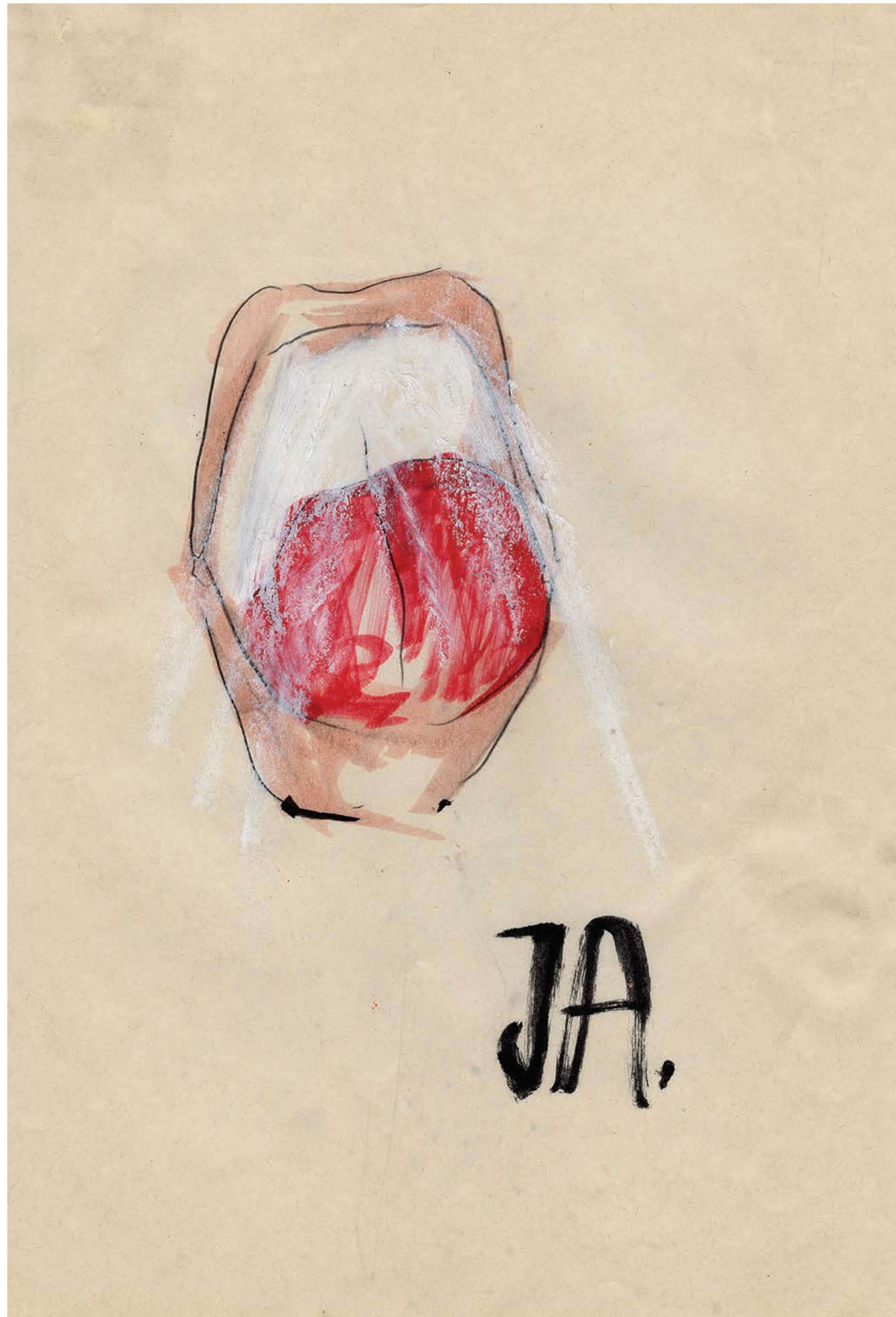
Installation view
Insomnia Drawings,
KINDL - Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2018)

Isabella Färnkäs' *Insomnia Drawings* suggest that they are the product of sleepless nights. They play with that porous condition of exhaustion that is described by the German word *Durchlässigkeit*, or "permeability." They visualize the cognitive instant of being overloaded, when the inner walls collapse and your own world of feelings comes to the surface unfiltered, while conversely the outside world is also free to enter it. In order to allow this openness, this porosity, to emerge, you need to establish a space beforehand in which the corset of self-protection can loosen without having any consequences. Rather than a physical room, intimacy creates a psychologically open space. Intimacy can result from trust between people, or it can simply come from trusting the inner feeling that tells you, you will not be hurt, even if you reveal your points of vulnerability. Or at least you have the trust to believe that if you are injured, you will be able to bear the injury and recover. You will heal, you will learn to understand, and you will continue to grow.

Isabella Färnkäs' work relies on this sort of intimacy evoked by trust in two ways. Through their close connection to the inner world of the artist, the drawings rely on trust in the intimate situation that exists between them and the viewer or recipient. The drawings are also a place of intimacy in themselves. They are the independent space that relies on itself, in which you are able to have feelings that are so much freer than in the outside world, without any consequences—also because they are spaces that are dedicated to experiments and self-awareness. In this respect, Färnkäs' method closely resembles those of many women artists in art history. Artists such as Louise Bourgeois asserted their positions within the art world with emotional, psychologizing statements that were provocative at the time, some of which continue to provoke today. Bourgeois' statement that the goal of artistic work is self-understanding and the goal of self-understanding is personal happiness is one of an endless number of examples. This was achieved and continues to unfold through the abandoning of conceptual, formalist, and materialist strategies of art production, which have formed the foundation of the art canon since the 1950s—and has been opposed by women such as Ana Mendieta, Clarice Lispector, Simone de Beauvoir, Maya Deren, Marguerite Duras, Eugénie Séville, Yvonne Rainer, Sylvia Plath, Roni Horn, Carrie Mae Weems, Tracey Emin, Chris Kraus, and countless others.

(continued)





(continued)

The works on paper that Färnkäs has produced since 2007 can be arranged into constantly changing groups of new subject matter. Now comprising over five hundred drawings that are worked from both sides, they are taken from notebooks that the artist has carried with her since her childhood. The Japanese paper that they are made of refers to her personal relationship to her birthplace, Tokyo. Her sketchbooks are a portable reservoir of quick ideas and spontaneous expressions of feeling. She always carries them with her, and they can be used anywhere in the world as an intimate space. For this reason, the drawings are the result of a performative approach that goes beyond working in the studio. Are the drawings comparable with diary entries? Judging from the directness of their expression, this could be the case. However, is it necessarily a kind of autobiographical drawing?

Similar to the way that actors draw from their personal arsenal of feelings without actually experiencing a real breakdown on stage—although delving into the depths of their emotional memories certainly amounts to great emotional strain—Färnkäs' drawings are also an observation of inner movements that are not necessarily acutely experienced in the instant that they are activated. Rather, they are evoked for the purpose of an artistic investigation whose performative configuration is similar to *écriture automatique*. In her *Insomnia Drawings* the necessary, specific mode in which drawing becomes an automatism takes on the features of an obsession that has been made productive through artistic shaping. Hyper concentration sets in, paired with an overflowing, explosive interest in expression. Motivated by a practically autoerotic, autopoietic energy, she fills page after page, until night turns into day and the trip comes to an end.

- Text by Ania Kołyszko

LUCIFERS DARLINGS Performance

Art Berlin Opening I Fair for Modern and Contemporary Art
Organized by Monopol, Niche & KW Institute for Contemporary Art
13.09.2017
Curated by Maurin Dietrich & Cathrin Mayer

Berlin Art Week 2017 has come and gone, but our drunken regrets live on in infamy. Hosted by Monopol magazine and Niche showroom, the hosting duo provided enough free drinks to keep guests happy and performance pieces that maintained everyone's full attention. Taking center stage was an alluring performance piece from Isabella Fürnkäs, which featured the talents of Nikolas Brummer alongside an eerily similar dopplegänger, Jan Seevetal. Adorned in horns, the two spent the evening stroking one another as onlookers tried to determine the level of implied incest going on. As always, the event served as a who's who of Berlin's art scene, featuring appearances from Britta Thie as well as Eva & Adele throughout the night. In case you missed out, luckily we were there to capture all of the excitement. Scroll through the images below for a taste of what went down. Apologies in advance for any FOMO that ensues.

- Text by SLEEK Magazine

Two performers lie and play in a heaven-like mattress landscape sprinkled with balls that resemble breasts and a thick Jute rope. They pose and crawl holding on to tree-like vases and ludically interact, like gods. Keeping cheeky and sensual eye contact with the public an alluring atmosphere is created - a heavenly deal with the devil..

- Isabella Fürnkäs

<https://www.artforum.com/diary/louisa-elderton-at-the-1st-art-berlin-71195>
<https://www.sleek-mag.com/article/monopol-berlin-art-week-party-2017/>

Reference images to the right
Maarten de Vos
Juicio Final, 1570





Lucifers Darlings, 2017
Performance (durational, approx. 180min) with Nikolas Brummer & Jan Seevetal on September 13th 2017, 9pm
Styling and production with Laura Catania



Installation view
Lucifer Darlings,
Art Berlin Opening (2017)



Installation view
Lucifer Darlings,
Art Berlin Opening (2017)



NO POWER POTENTIAL Solo exhibition

SSZ Sued, Cologne
14.04 - 19.05.2016

A green carpet spread out in the gallery formulates the starting point for an installation that combines video, performance and sculpture. A silk fabric runs through the room, becoming the projection screen. In the projected video, people are skiing and you can see scenes in the snow, that are interrupted by quick cuts of loudness and noise. The voice of a woman (Isabella's mother) reads excerpts from „Le Corps utopique“ by Michel Foucault. Glazed pottery objects are hung

in rows, similar to chains of thought. As if in a dream, the performers play an alternating game, move the objects and themselves on the carpet. The focus of this site-specific work is a critical survey of social orientation on potential in the context of production. In this context, the exhibition title „Sugar Makes You Sad“ as well as the work title „No Power Potential“ points to the reflective state of a „low“ that presumably preceded a „high“.

- Text by Philipp Fürnkäs

Watch the video here: <https://vimeo.com/123070239>

No Power Potential, 2016

Video installation with performance and surround sound, back-projection on silk cloth
Durational performance (approx. 180min) on April 14th 2016, 6 - 9 pm
Performance with Rebekka Benzenberg and Lukas von der Gracht

Je rêve d'une science..., 2015

Video 5min, color/sound, loop

Go, 2012

23 sculptures made of glazed pottery

Photos by Alexander Basile





Installation view
No Power Potential,
SSZ Sued, Cologne (2016)



Installation view
No Power Potential,
SSZ Sued, Cologne (2016)



Installation view
No Power Potential,
SSZ Sued, Cologne (2016)



Installation view
No Power Potential,
SSZ Sued, Cologne (2016)



Je rêve d'une science...(video stills), 2015
Video 5min, color/sound, loop
„Le corps utopique” spoken by Daniella Séville

DISLOCATED HEADQUARTERS Solo exhibition

Kunstakademie Düsseldorf
10.07 - 17.07.2017

Originally, I wanted to ride through the halls of the Kunstakademie on an ice bear, Johannes Paul Raether encouraged me to do so. The Düsseldorf Zoo did not allow such an action. So I showed a few drawings, a performance and an installation.

- *Isabella Fürnkäs*

Lukas and Isabella fight with two sharpened knives, slowly slicing each others clothes open. Their interaction shows violent yet erotic notions full of trust and active-passive power, revealing naked skin. They chase each other through the hallways up to the rooftop of the Kunstakademie - a showdown battle between two lovers.

- *Text for Personal Counterpoints, 2017*

Les Dérivées, 2017

3 stainless steel sculptures with wheels, 6 objects made of silk clay, two red costumes worn at the performance, knives, scissors, sheep skin, melted plastic
Dimensions variable

Counterpoints, 2017

Performance by Isabella Fürnkäs and Lukas von der Gracht
Durational performance (approx. 20min) on July 13th 2017, 4pm
Photos by Moritz Krauth
*Supervised by Andreas Gursky, Stefan Hostettler and Johannes Paul Raether

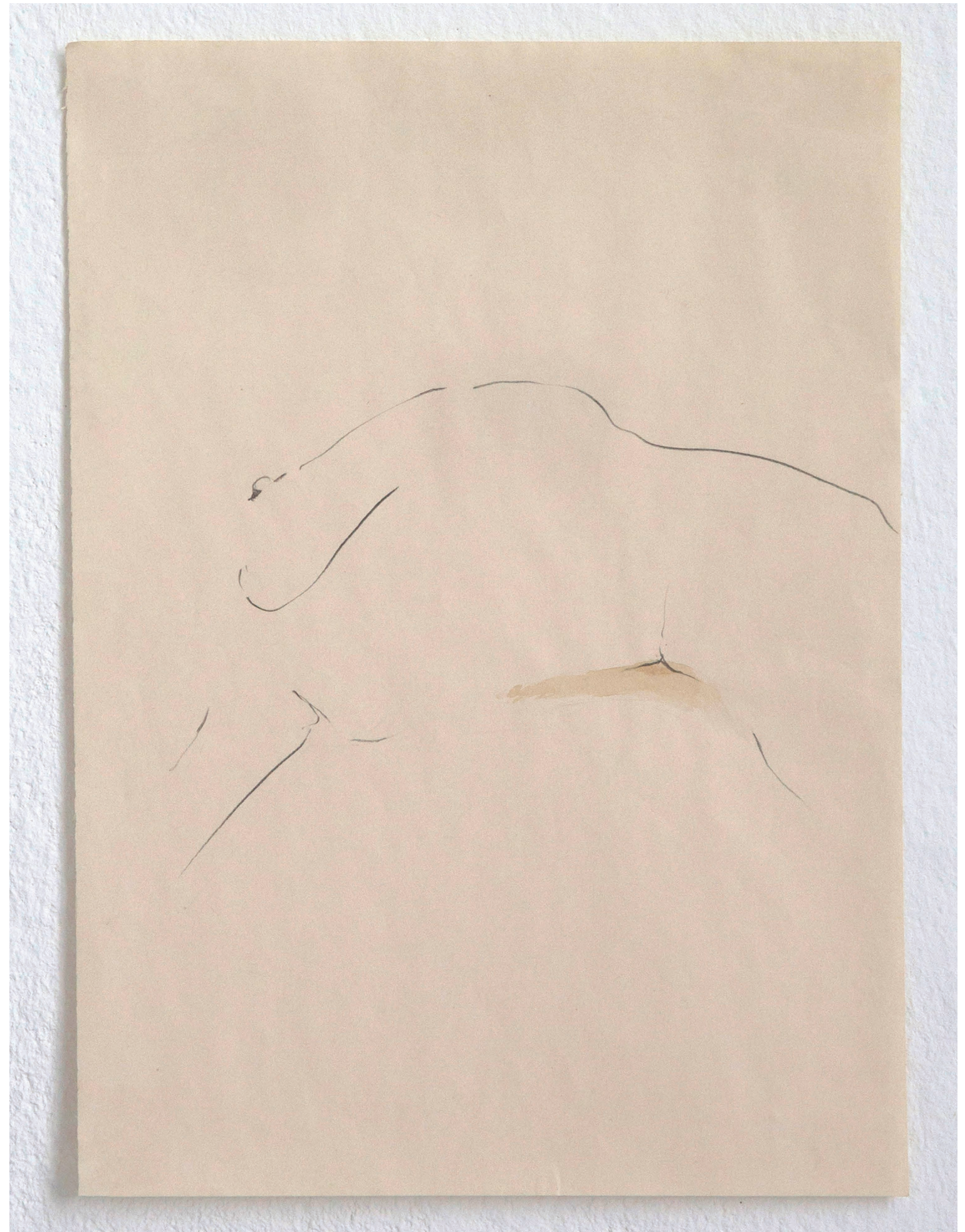




Installation view
Dislocated Headquarters,
Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (2017)

Untitled, 2007-2010
3 Drawings
Mixed media on paper, frames made of paper clay
Dimensions variable

Installation view
Dislocated Headquarters,
Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (2017)





Les Dérivées, 2017

3 stainless steel sculptures with wheels, 6 objects made of silk clay, two red costumes worn at the performance, knives, scissors, sheep skin, melted plastic
Dimensions variable

Installation view

Dislocated Headquarters,
Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (2017)

SELFIECAPYLSE

Video installation

Isabella Fürnkäs and Lukas von der Gracht stage a hunt through urban space in a hybrid adaptation of a gameplay mission and smartphone selfie with a well-chosen setting and carefully devised costumes. Both the gray concrete parking garage backdrop and the first-person shooter garb and face-paint work as stylization devices: respectively as a fashionable setting of contemporary culture and as an attempt to approximate the smooth sterility of video-game animation aesthetics. While it normally takes a lot of effort to render virtual-reality aesthetics that are accurate with regard to the facts of material reality (that is, artificially generating an illusion of the world inside the museum), the material reality aesthetic here seems to be seeking the illusion of an animated (that is, virtual, not actual) referent. And on this level, finally, the parking garage together with the pacing camera inside of it are ultimately a metaphor, in which two protagonists chase each other and move through a self-contained space that is like a Möbius strip – a bubble or capsule, as if it had no exterior. The split-screen projection from the smartphone cameras is an interesting update of the closed-circuit thematic of conceptual filmmakers of the 1960s and '70s ; their camera, posed as both a mirror and a competing reality, has now become a facet of everyday life.

- Text by Susanne Titz

Watch the video here: <https://vimeo.com/139192624>

Exhibition list

25 of 78, HMKV Hartware MedienKunstVerein, Dortmund (2020), *Video of the month*, HMKV Hartware MedienKunstVerein, Dortmund, curated by Inke Arns (Förderpreis NRW) (2016), *On the Currents of the City*, Museum Abteiberg, curated by Markus Ambach and Susanne Titz (2016), *Very Short Film Festival*, Cité des Arts Internationale, Paris, France (2016), *Seesaw Policy*, Filmwerkstatt Düsseldorf, curated by Jan Wagner (2015)

Selfiecalypse, 2015

Video installation, installed on a big pole

Video 10:50 min, color/sound, loop

Photos by Achim Kukulies





Installation view
On the Currents of the City,
Museum Abteiberg (2016)



Installation view
25 of 78,
HMKV Hardware MedienKunstVerein (2020)

ISABELLA FÜRNKÄS /
LUKAS VON DER GRACHT

Selfiecalypse - Teen Hunger Ultra Death Attack 1.0
2015

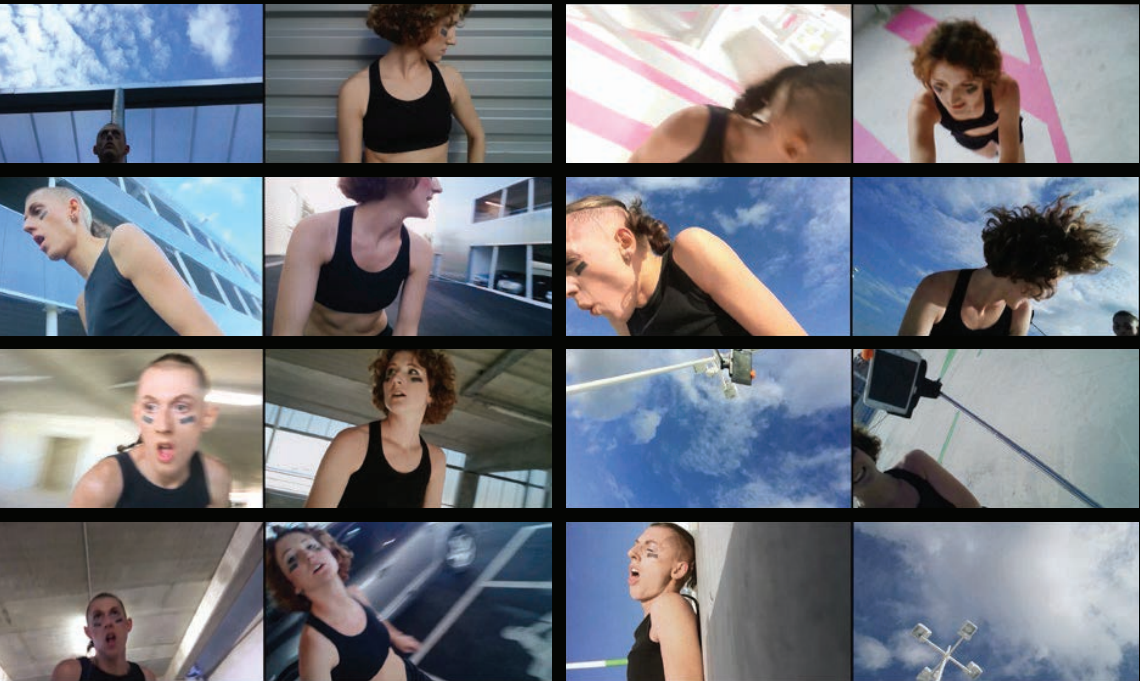
ISABELLA FÜRNKÄS UND LUKAS VON DER GRACHT
Selfiecalypse - Teen Hunger Ultra Death Attack 1.0
Video 11', Loop, 2015

Proces-Verbal, Dax, 28.07.2015, 15:53 Uhr

1| Vgl. Dan Graham, *Body Press* (1970/1972), *Roll. Filming Process* (1970), dazu: Dan Graham, „Film und Performance. Sechs Filme 1969–1974“, und ders.: „Videos in Beziehung zu Architektur“, in: Ulrich Wilmes (Hg.), *Dan Graham. Ausgewählte Schriften*, S. 33–43, S. 57–89.

Dass öffentliche Straßen und Räume zu Spielplätzen für Computerspiele wurden, geschah rund zwölf Monate nach der Produktion dieses Zweikanalfilms von Isabella Fürnkäs und Lukas von der Gracht. Ein Jahr später, im Sommer 2016, war Pokémon Go dann allgegenwärtig und die Symbiose von virtuellem und realem Spielplatz zu einer kollektiven Erfahrung geworden. In Guerilla-Manier völlig ohne Genehmigung war dies auch mit Pokéstops im Skulpturengarten des Museums Abteiberg sichtbar. Während des gleichen Zeitraums, von 2015 bis 2016, stieg die Distribution von Foto- und Film-Selfies in der deutschen Gesellschaft exponentiell. Über die Funktion „Video“ in marktgängigen Smartphones und mittels zusehends billigerer Kommunikationstarife wurden die Dokumentarfilme aus dem eigenen Leben und die Aufnahmen von eigenen schauspielerischen Aktionen – als bürgerliche Umsetzung der neuen Möglichkeit von Enactment und Reinactment – in immer größeren Kreisen praktiziert und verbreitet. Jedes Smartphone kann das jetzt, und die Idee von Produzent und Konsument hat sich auf diese Weise diversifiziert. Allmählich bahnte sich die Ahnung an, dass wir von Ersterem zu viel haben und uns als Zweitere bald massiv Gedanken darüber machen würden. Isabella Fürnkäs und Lukas von der Gracht inszenieren in der doppelten Adaption von Spielszenario und Smartphone-Selfie eine Jagd durch einen städtischen Ort, der gut ausgewählt ist; ebenso sind Outfit und Setting präzise gesetzt. Beides, die Kulisse des grauen Beton-Parkdecks und die Kleidung und Maske der Ego-Shooter, wirken in der Kombination wie Stilisierungen: als ein modisches Setting der Gegenwartskultur beziehungsweise viel mehr noch als der Versuch einer nächstmöglichen Annäherung an die Ästhetik der sterilglatten Game-Animationsbilder. Während gewöhnlicherweise die Ästhetik der virtuellen Realität große Anstrengungen unternimmt, der materiell-faktischen Realität gleich zu werden – das heißt in der Künstlichkeit des Mediums eine Illusion von Welt zu erzeugen – scheint hier die Ästhetik der materiell-faktischen Realität sehnsüchtig auf eine Illusion von animierter, also virtueller und nicht echter Gegenwart zu zielen. Auf dieser Ebene ist schließlich auch das Parkdeck mitsamt dem darauf stattfindenden Kamerarennen eine Metapher, da die beiden Protagonisten sich hier in einem Innenraum wie in einer Möbiusschleife jagen und bewegen. Sie befinden sich in einer Blase oder Kapsel – ganz so, als gäbe es kein Außen. Die Zweikanalprojektion aus Smartphone-Kameras aktualisiert dabei auf interessante Weise den Closed Circuit der Konzeptfilmer der 1960er- und 1970er-Jahre: Deren Thematisierung der Kamera als Spiegel beziehungsweise konkurrierende Realität ist jetzt Allgemeingut.

Susanne Titz



Filmstills
Selfiecalypse - Teen Hunger Ultra Death Attack 1.0

Isabella Fürnkäs und Lukas von der Gracht, 2500,
Performance Museum Abteiberg 2016

1| See Dan Graham, *Body Press* (1970/72), *Roll. Filming Process* (1970), Text: Dan Graham, "Film und Performance. Six Films 1969–1974," and "Videos in Relation to Architecture," in Ulrich Wilmes (ed.), *Dan Graham. Ausgewählte Schriften*, pp.33–43, 57–89.

Public roads and spaces became sites of computer-gameplay around 12 months after the production of Isabella Fürnkäs and Lukas von der Gracht's split-screen film. In the summer of 2016, Pokémon-Go was omnipresent. The symbiosis of real and virtual fields of gameplay entered into the collective experience, and, guerrilla-like, without any authorization, Pokéstops appeared in the sculpture garden of the Museum Abteiberg too. Around the same time, Germany saw an exponential rise in its share of photo and video selfies. With the notable reduction in data fees and the entry of smartphones with "video" functions into the market, people realized the new potential for enactment and reenactment, and ever-larger swaths of people produced and disseminated footage of their own performative actions and documentary videos from their individual lives. Now every smartphone is equipped with these capabilities, and this has led to diversification of the concepts of producer and consumer. Gradually the idea emerged that we had been focusing too much on the former and would soon be much more concerned with the latter. Isabella Fürnkäs and Lukas von der Gracht stage a hunt through urban space in a hybrid adaptation of a gameplay mission and smartphone selfie with a well-chosen setting and carefully devised costumes. Both the gray concrete parking garage backdrop and the first-person shooter garb and face-paint work as stylization devices: respectively as a fashionable setting of contemporary culture and as an attempt to approximate the smooth sterility of video-game animation aesthetics. While it normally takes a lot of effort to render virtual-reality aesthetics that are accurate with regard to the facts of material reality (that is, artificially generating an illusion of the world inside the museum), the material reality aesthetic here seems to be seeking the illusion of an animated (that is, virtual, not actual) referent. And on this level, finally, the parking garage together with the pacing camera inside of it are ultimately a metaphor, in which two protagonists chase each other and move through a self-contained space that is like a Möbius strip – a bubble or capsule, as if it had no exterior. The split-screen projection from the smartphone cameras is an interesting update of the closed-circuit thematic of conceptual filmmakers of the 1960s and '70s; their camera, posed as both a mirror and a competing reality, has now become a facet of everyday life.

Susanne Titz



VICE VERSA Video installation with performance

Two TV monitors are obliquely stationed on a white mattress, like pillows on a bed. The viewers can see fragments of images passing through the monitor and hear the sound of a woman conversing in a low voice, mainly asking about her counterpart's mental state or bringing up gender-specific topics. The images, projected along with dialogues such as "hi," "how are you," or "I can't see," do not appear to be relevant. An androgynous-looking figure, appearing to be asleep on the bed, exhibits the 'powerful sense of solitude' nestled within an individual living in our own time, back turned toward the TV monitor. The artist focuses on reflecting on the fragmented order of time in our era, and narrating this topic in a language that exists somewhere in between compressed expressions and the description of a fragile figure. The viewers are offered an opportunity to ponder on the various possibilities that are brought forth through familiarity and new concepts about communities.

- Text by Hyun Jeung Kim

Watch the videos here: <https://vimeo.com/120756642> & <https://vimeo.com/120541130>

Exhibition list

13th Biennale for Contemporary Art Dakar, Goethe Institut Dakar, Senegal (2018), *Digitale Düsseldorf*, Anti-chambre, curated by Wilko Austermann (2017), *Wrap around the time*, Nam June Paik Art Center Seoul (2016) *A Diachronic Home*, CSA Space Vancouver, Canada, curated by Steven Tong (2015), *Rundgang*, Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (2015)

Vice Versa, 2015

Two-channel Video installation, mattress, two 40" flatscreens

Videos 22 min each, color/sound, loop

Dialogue spoken by Juan Antonio Olivares and Ewouyne Waller

Durational performance on the mattress, length variable

Screening of the video documentation during the exhibition period

Performance with Oumy Ndiaye, Marlene Kollender, Minsun Choi, Jordan Milner and Lukas von der Gracht



Installation view
13th Biennale for Contemporary Art Dakar,
Goethe Institut Dakar, Senegal (2018)



Installation view
Wrap Around the Time,
Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul (2016)



Installation view
Wrap Around the Time,
Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul (2016)



Installation view
Wrap Around the Time,
Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul (2016)



Installation view
Digitale Düsseldorf,
Antichambre (2017)



Installation view
A Diachronic Home,
CSA Space Vancouver (2015)



Installation view
Rundgang,
Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (2015)



Text excerpt from the video installation

hi

how are you?

oh

do you want to talk about it?

come on

trust me

you can trust me

why?

what's the matter?

i don't know

go on

do you want some water?

i'm sorry

i really don't understand

go on

play the game

what are you doing right now?

you should sleep

someone's on the phone

wait

hi

i don't know

what's up

no

i'm confused

i'm not sure

feeling dissociative

distracted

stupid

what time is it?

i can't talk

i can't see

move

yes
everything is moving

words don't exist

why are you doing this?

please

stop

nothing
what do you mean?

you?

i can't sleep

...

In the middle of the floor of a big exhibition hall, full of people hungry for art sincerities, a white mattress is placed – the ultimate privacy in the midst of a social pandemonium. On the mattress, a young, thin body lounges. Perhaps sleeping, or dozing, or dreaming – even possibly doped. Neither the slovenly-cool clothes, nor the physical characteristics of this body reveal to us its gender or social class. Naked, untidy feet – the casual, grubby style of teen-ager pedicure. The body devoid of identifications; just a young body... tired, overstrained, surrendered, ironically writing in white, on a dark blue jacket, “Ha-Wei”. But what made it so tired – this body?

Instead of two comfortable pillows, as in the manner of hotels’ King Beds, on the mattress are placed two monitors (the size of pillows). Chaotic-kaleidoscopic information runs wildly across the screens. We know the world expands without control; but digital signifiers, freed from flesh, expand even more turbulently, much wider and 100 times faster! From time to time, additional, smaller frames of screens are relayed across the monitors, with parallel and contrasting information.

At the beginning of this chaotic video, we see an eye, turned on a vertical axis. The artist gives us a hint: this is the specific vertical eye of our mind, which our culture uses to structure the drift of data entering us. Our mind places every datum we perceive within the symbolic structure of values created inside our consciousness, with its pyramidal-vertical and subordinated character. Every glittering datum here on the screens (a sea, a toy, a building under construction, a highway, some McDonald’s food etc.) is removed from its native context, thrown from the nest and stripped bare, therefore all the images look strangely active, having a double presence.

On both screens, lines of texts run alongside these tinsel shimmers – between these two monitors, an intense dialogue takes place. On the left are the writings of some obviously distinguished authority: tempting, provoking, seducing and enticing. But the answers from the right monitor seem to be mostly negative, confused, perplexed and bewildered. It’s clear that both genders are involved in this dialogue, and it definitely exposes a Hegelian master-slave character. Yes, it is a fact – within our present culture, woman is not only confused, she is actually absent; she doesn’t exist within the living world (as Lacan stated, “she has no foundation” – inside a patriarchal world she had no chance to develop her native language, her native discourse). Woman is just a sheer bewilderment, whereas the patriarchal-phallic discourse is a rigorous discourse of seduction. This gender dialogue (and indeed any dialogue between binary opposites) is firmly structured in our human consciousness in a misbalanced way – the dominant and submissive roles within binary opposites are clearly and permanently determined, and as usual everybody always plays them with delight. That’s how the structure works!

That is the reason for the ultimate loneliness we see on the mattress: “a form of dwelling” outside discourse, beyond language and also beyond any orientations (from time to time we see this figure on the mattress in the foetal position). All the figures of real alternative culture unconsciously long for such a state, because this kind of person (dating back to the Beatnik movement) is always and everywhere driven and motivated by the fully detached nature of our human soul.

Within Western culture these types of detached soul-wills created „the third space“, a space of rebel individuals (the other two spaces – state and religion, have an entirely communal nature), individuals who don’t want to accept the hegemony of the deterministic language of human culture, and with the help of subversive lifestyles, destabilization, deconstruction, trance, and ecstasy, strive to move beyond it – towards Khora – the territory of the pre-language condition. Perhaps, inside of this entirely open consciousness we have a chance to be reborn and succeed in developing an awareness beyond language, the restricted nature of culture, and the horrifying concreteness of „presence“.

“Vice Versa” opens up a realm of fundamental generalizations to us and it may even seem odd, that such a strong piece belongs to the young artist Isabella Fürnkäs. To reference such global issues and observe events so remotely, it is necessary to have a certain degree of detachment (which comes to a person only over time), and it also needs a long and certainly bitterly-tasted experience (where the trivialities of life are already left behind, and all phenomena begin to be seen, more or less, in their natural light). How can a young artist succeed in showing us all this?

- Excerpt from an essay by Gia Edzgveradze

Read the full text “Dirty T-Shirt Culture” publication,
<http://www.verlag-kettler.de/programm/gia-edzgveradze>



2500 Performative installation

Museum Abteiberg
25.09.2016

The performative installation 2500 shows a communication without spoken words. A textil photo is used as a bed sheet during the performance and includes a selection of 2500 images that Lukas & Isabella sent to each other via iMessage during 2 years. This „iBlanket“ unites most personal memories, work-in-progress steps, material discussion and travel plans: a visual communication transferred from digital to analogue.

- Text by Isabella Fürnkäs & Lukas von der Gracht

2500, 2016
Performative Installation by Isabella Fürnkäs & Lukas von der Gracht
Approx. 20min
Photographic print on fabric, snowspray on 11m photo roll



Installation view
2500,
Museum Abteiberg (2016)



Installation view
2500,
Museum Abteiberg (2016)



Installation view
2500,
Museum Abteiberg (2016)

TRUST Performance

The textual piece TRUST is spoken by two performers who move through the crowd crouching and touching the bystanders. The pronunciation is gentle and delicate, both voices are echoing in similar intonation. The whispered dialogue appears to be spoken by one voice forming one body with the audience. The performers are dressed and painted in gold, questioning the value of skin. The dialogue genuinely reflects narrative structures and points towards genderless communication and dream-like. The performance is embodied by Isabella Fürnkäs and Pola Fendel in the framework of Isabella Fürnkäs' textual piece TRUST. Costumes and styling are specially designed by Marion Benoit & Bonana van Mill.

- Text by Sian Sull



Exhibition list

Salon ACME, Mexico City (2020)

Pogobar KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2017)

TRUST, 2017

Performance (approx. 15min) on November 16th 2017, 8pm

with Pola Fendel and Isabella Fürnkäs

Polaroid photos by Keta Gavasheli



Installation view
HEAVEN with Laura Catania,
Curated by Maurin Dietrich and Cathrin Mayer
Pogobar KW Institute for Contemporary Art (2017)



Installation view
HEAVEN with Laura Catania,
Curated by Maurin Dietrich and Cathrin Mayer
Pogobar KW Institute for Contemporary Art (2017)

HUNGRY MICE & SALTY PEPPER Solo exhibition

Clages, Cologne
04.03 - 01.04.2017

Isabella Fűrnkäs' first solo exhibition at Galerie Clages evokes rapture and a loss of control. Already from outside the exhibition, oversized eyes direct one's gaze toward four life-size figures, which are more than simply physical counterparts. On the contrary, they accumulate in the space and almost oppress the visitor with their drawn-on sensory organs, which grow in place of their faces and expand throughout the room. With their oversized teeth, ears, and tongues, they formally draw attention to the different avenues of sensory perception and seem to do so at an unabashed volume.

This drifting moment of being-thrown-off and the search for a calm point makes one's eyes wander further through the space. Droplets drawn on the gallery's walls guide one's flowing gaze. The droplets, which inevitably conjure associations with tears, are a recurring motif in Fűrnkäs' work. They subtly work through the contradiction of water's neutrality as an element and its natural fluidity in the form of tears and sweat, evoking the type of physical sensations and emotions that evade our control. There is something liberating in this ineluctable movement — no in-between state, nothing asked or sought-after. It seems that the overextended limbs of the figures reach, too, for that sort of autonomy.

- Text excerpt by Julia Haarman

Unpredictable Liars, 2017

Installation, mixed media, various Japanese fabrics & cloth, oil sticks, acrylic spray

Dimensions variable

Photos by Simon Vogel

Drops, 2017

90 pieces, wall installation, oil sticks

10 x 20cm

Untitled Drawings, 2010-2017

20 Drawings, mixed media on paper, framed with plexiglas

31.5 x 24cm

Uncanny Valley, 2017

Video installation, kinetic sand, video screen, stainless steel rod

Dimensions variable

Video 3min, color/no sound, loop





Installation view
Hungry Mice & Salty Pepper,
Clages, Cologne (2017)



Installation view
Hungry Mice & Salty Pepper,
Clages, Cologne (2017)

Installation view
Hungry Mice & Salty Pepper,
Clages, Cologne (2017)





Installation view
Hungry Mice & Salty Pepper,
Clages, Cologne (2017)



Installation view
Hungry Mice & Salty Pepper,
Clages, Cologne (2017)

A DIACHRONIC HOME

Solo exhibition

CSA Space, Vancouver
06.06 - 06.07.2015

A Diachronic Home is a solo exhibition by Isabella Fürnkäs, featuring two works Diachronic Home and Vice Versa. Diachronic Home is a four channel video installation. The family's bookshelves laden with philosophical and literary works, festooned with the accretion of a life spent between cultures. These shelves serve as backdrops in the manner of still life paintings static and motionless. The contemplative silence of the shelves is disrupted by the interjection of attempts to query the world and the objects within it. Along with voices reading excerpts from Elias Canetti, Franz Kafka, Junichiro Tanizaki, Kobo Abe, Marcel Proust, Marshall McLuhan, Michel Foucault, Oscar Wilde, Robert Musil, Roland Barthes, Ryunosuke Akutagawa, Samuel Beckett.

Vice Versa is a two channel video installation, with monitors resting on a mattress. As in Diachronic Home a stream of images moves across the screens, as if recollection of half remembered dreams. A disjointed conversation between male and female voice, threads its way through the syncopated typology of the videos. Special thanks to Jordan Milner who kindly agreed to enact the performative aspect of the work on the opening night, as priorly performed by Lukas von der Gracht in Düsseldorf.

- Text by Steven Tong

Excerpts
Elias Canetti - Die Blendung, Franz Kafka - Katz und Maus (Nachgelassene Schriften), Junichiro Tanizaki - The Secret, Kobo Abe - Der verbrannte Stadtplan, Marcel Proust - A la recherche du temps perdu, Marshall McLuhan - Understanding Media, Michel Foucault - Dits et écrits, Oscar Wilde - The Artist, Robert Musil - Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, Roland Barthes - Fragments d'un discours amoureux, Ryunosuke Akutagawa - The nose, Samuel Beckett - Krapp's Last Tape

Vice Versa, 2015
Durational performance (approx. 180min) with Jordan Milner on June 6th 2015, 6 - 9 pm
2-channel Videoinstallation, mattress, surround sound
Videos 22min each, sound/color, loop

Diachronic Home, 2015
4-channel Videoinstallation, shelves à 3 m, surround sound
Videos 45min in total, sound/color, loop
Read by Juan Antonio Olivares, Kaoli Mashio, Lukas von der Gracht and Daniella Séville
Filmed with Moritz Krauth and Magdalena Kita

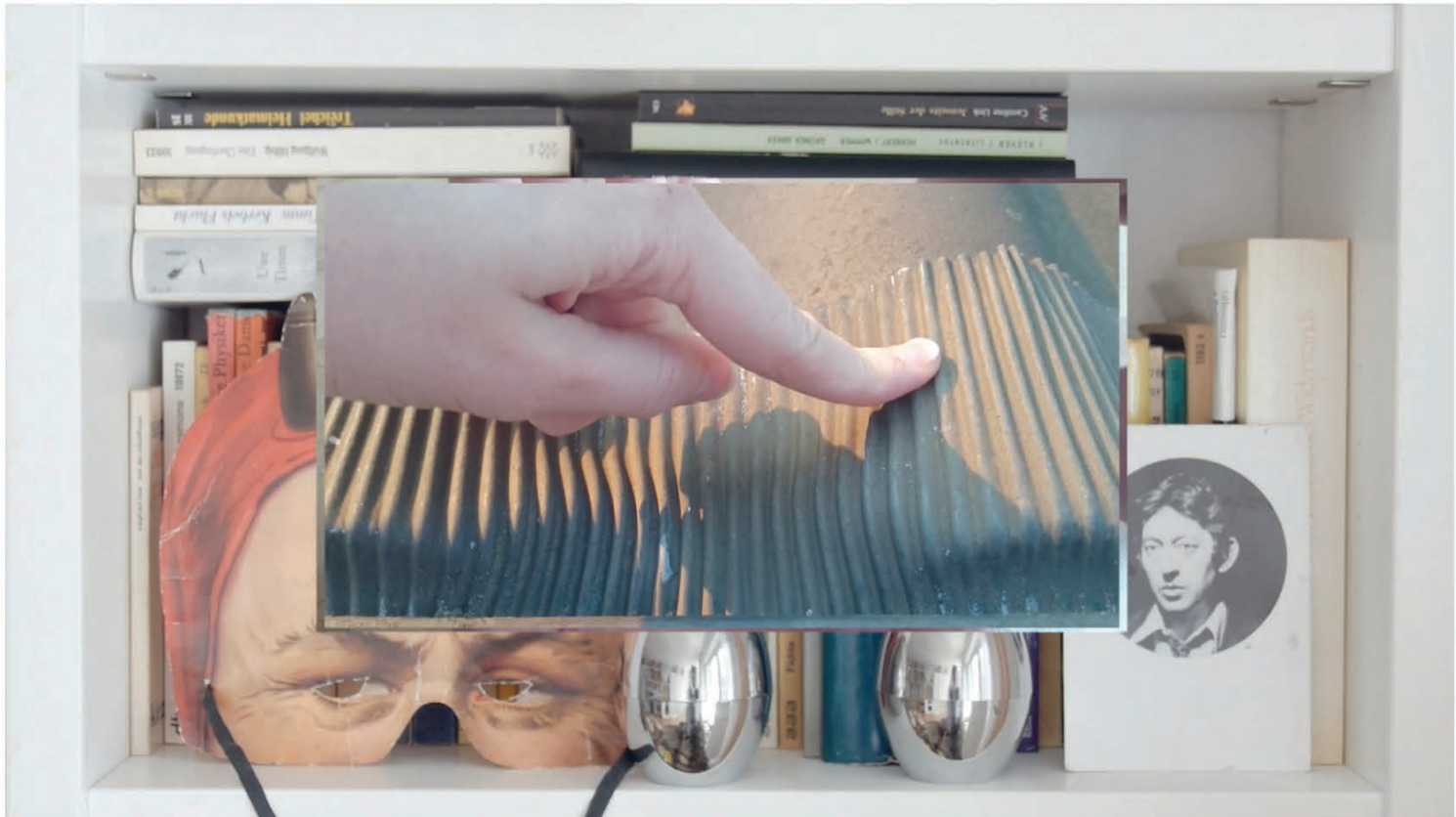
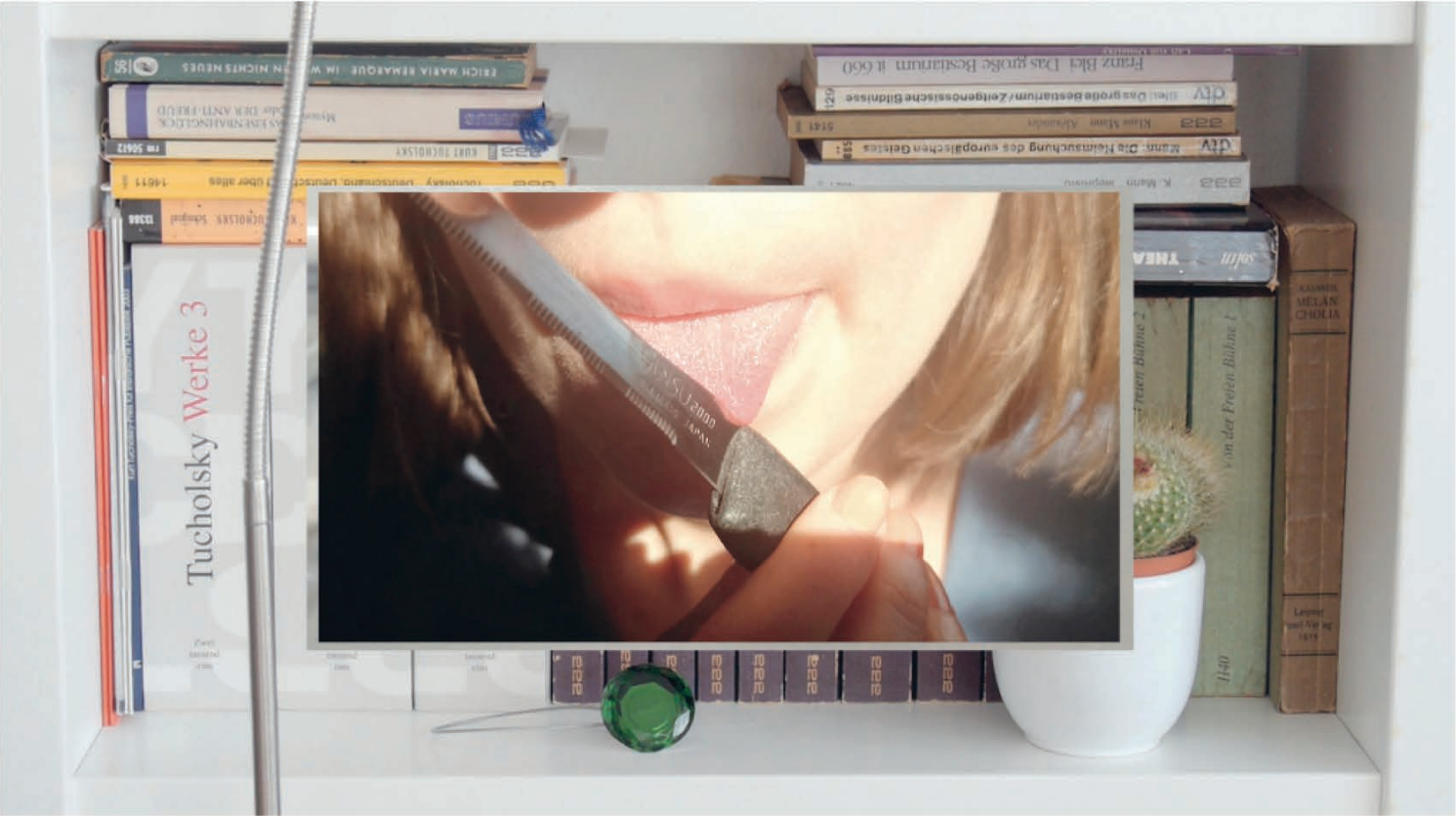




Installation view
A Diachronic Home,
CSA Space Vancouver (2015)



Installation view
A Diachronic Home,
CSA Space Vancouver (2015)



Diachronic Home (video stills), 2015
4-channel Video installation, shelves à 3 m, surround sound
Videos 45min in total, sound/color, loop

秘密 - A Diachronic Home

Isabella Färnkäs

June, 2015



The battles have been cancelled – have we noticed?

Gia Edzgeradze

In the middle of the floor of a big exhibition hall, full of people hungry for art sincerities, a white mattress is placed – the ultimate privacy in the midst of social pandemonium. On the mattress, a young, thin body lounges. Perhaps sleeping, dozing, or dreaming – even possibly doped. Neither the slovenly-cool clothes, nor the physical characteristics of this body reveal to us its gender or social class. Naked, untidy feet – the casual, grubby style of teenager pedicure. The body devoid of identifications; just a young body... tired, overstrained, surrendered, ironically writing in white, on a dark blue jacket, "Ha-Wei". But what made it so tired – this body?



Instead of comfortable pillows, in the manner of hotel beds, on the mattress are two monitors (the size of pillows). Chaotic-kaleidoscopic information runs wildly across the screens. We know the world expands without control; but digital signifiers, freed from flesh, expand even more turbulently, much wider and 100 times faster! From time to time, additional, smaller frames of screens are relayed across the monitors, with parallel and contrasting information.

At the beginning of this chaotic video, we see an eye, turned on a vertical axis. The artist gives us a hint: this is the specific vertical eye of our mind, which our culture uses to structure the drift of data entering us. Our mind places every datum we perceive within the symbolic structure of values created inside our consciousness, with its pyramidal-vertical and subordinated character. Every glittering datum here on the screens (a sea, a toy, a building under construction, a highway, some McDonald's food etc.) is removed from its native context, thrown from the nest and stripped bare, therefore all the images look strangely active, having a double presence.

On both screens, lines of texts run alongside these tinsel shimmers – between these two monitors, an intense dialogue takes place. On the left are the writings of some distinguished authority: tempting, provoking, seducing and enticing. But the answers from the right monitor seem to be mostly negative, confused, perplexed and bewildered. It's clear that both genders are involved in this dialogue, and it definitely exposes a Hegelian master-slave character. Yes, it is a fact – within our present culture, woman is not only confused, she is actually absent; she doesn't exist within the living world (as Alcan stated, "she has no foundation" – inside a patriarchal world she had no chance to develop her native language, her native discourse). Woman is just a sheer bewilderment, whereas the patriarchal-phallic discourse is a rigorous discourse of seduction. This gender dialogue (and indeed any dialogue between binary opposites) is firmly structured in our human consciousness in an unbalanced way – the dominant and submissive roles within binary opposites are clearly and permanently determined, and as usual everybody always plays them with delight. That's how the structure works!

What is not structurally innate is expelled from the structure by the anonymous will of the structure. That's why, here on the mattress, we see an outcast – an outcast body, rejecting the adoption and display of identifying signs, refusing to be part of a determined form of symbolic exchange.

That is the reason for the ultimate loneliness we see on the mattress: "a form of dwelling" outside discourse, beyond

language and also beyond any orientations (from time to time we see this figure on the mattress in the fetal position). All the figures of real alternative culture unconsciously long for such a state, because this kind of person (dating back to the Beatnik movement) is always and everywhere driven and motivated by the fully detached nature of our human soul.

Within Western culture these types of detached soul-wills created "the third space", a space of rebel individuals (the other two spaces — state and religion, have an entirely communal nature), individuals who don't want to accept the hegemony of the deterministic language of human culture, and with the help of subversive lifestyles, destabilization, deconstruction, trance, and ecstasy, strive to move beyond it — towards Khora — the territory of the pre-language condition. Perhaps, inside of this entirely open consciousness, we have a chance to be reborn and succeed in developing awareness beyond language, the restricted nature of culture, and the horrifying concreteness of "presence".

And what of the background, represented by the information running on the flickering monitors? Today, for our social space, the goals to be reached are not "Real" and ontological — these two lie outside the scope of social attention. Today, social interest is involved only with social life itself. That is why the avalanche of visual signs running on the screens are just empty signifiers, they do not have any visual energy and they are not loaded with any deeper meaning! So, the transformation water into wine (via the intervention of Jesus) didn't happen; on the contrary, empty signifiers multiply so boundlessly that we only live in their frantic stream without any opportunity to dive deeper into any data, notions, or ideas — which is always humanity's desperate desire. We just skate on the surface — the romanticism of depths, penetration and stepping into other territories gave way to the reality of the next minute and the next second.

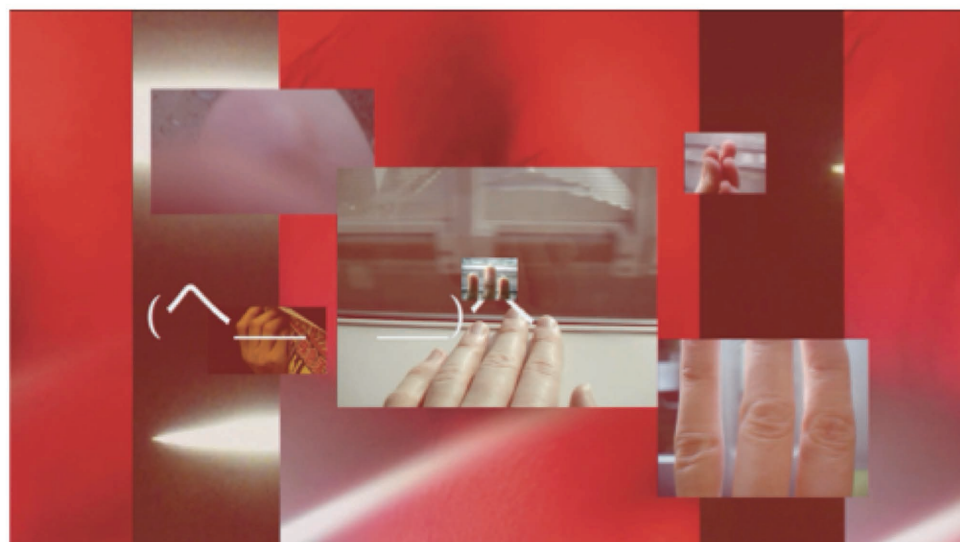
And is this good or bad?? We do not know yet — and therefore we suffer...

Our hermit on the mattress is also unaware of this; that's why he is in "nowhere" — in a gap, in the doorway, between two streams — an old and a new; here it is difficult to survive: without relatives, friends, without communication and orientation — being inside the "Real" and enjoying a no-thing!

For such a type of recluse the escape can go two ways. First: to go back and become again a part of what is no longer in the present: the historic consciousness of "depth and territories" is completely exhausted but it is always possible to organise and distort current data, via some historical patterns or other of 'meaning' as cherished by the mind. Or second: to refuse entirely the "self" and to open one's consciousness towards the forceful drift of signs, and to the "dynamic unity of obviousnesses", and to begin to float together with the world.

(It is only we human beings who divide signs into naturally-born or artificially-fabricated. There is no division of this kind on an ontological level.)

The world is oneness, and it floats not knowing interruptions, accidents, reparations, goals and tasks (all this garbage is only located in our heads). We know about this kind of universal drift only theoretically and virtually. But what is obvious is that the creature on the mattress doesn't want any more theories and virtual illusions; but unfortunately — and this is dramatic — he is not yet ready to take any practical steps. That's why he is in a suspended condition: the human



being has no access yet to the realm of detached song-games of an entirely self-sufficient soul.

This over-described artwork, "Vice Versa", opens up a realm of fundamental generalizations to us, and it may seem odd that such a piece belongs to the very young artist Isabella Fuernkaes. To reference such global issues, and observe events so remotely, it is necessary to have a certain degree of detachment (which comes to a person only over time), and it also needs a long and certainly bitter experience (where the trivialities of life are already left behind, and all phenomena is seen, more or less, in their natural light). How can a young artist succeed in showing us all this? Perhaps there is a hidden secret here, hidden but having a huge impact on us — some sort of super-external, as well as congenital factors: Isabella grew up in Japan till the age of eighteen (in the midst of a culture of contemplation and detachment), but on the other hand her parents are from "good old Europe" — a German father and a French mother (and as is well-known, Europe has more than enough bitter historical experience). So, probably these broad, global influences are the precondition for these kinds of "transcontinental questions"

In a personal conversation with the artist I had the pleasure of hearing about her new project "秘密 - Diachronic Home". My pleasure was to feel how a young soul within the darkness of our daily life, tries to come nearer to the spiritual form of responsibility for meaning and for its production — especially in the territory of art!

Her new project, which is still in progress, is also connected with big questions, examining profound and fundamental paradigms. As in her previous work, we come across contrasting visual layers, but here there is an addition is a layer of sound. Several monitors placed on shelves show images of books on shelves (works by well-known authors — this is the library of the artist's father, who is a philosopher). Structured in a strict geometric way into one impenetrable book wall, these books, with their design and aura, look like the celebratory garments of our severe, but old and long-standing friend, Logos. In front of the books we see flirtatiously charming and seductive trinkets (which are usually placed in front of the books by the female half of the family). It seems that in these trinkets the whole seduction and charm of Eros, that was once coquettishly playing with the formidable Logos (now fully appropriated by male discourse), is blocked. But one can say more; both of these principles (Logos and Eros) are shown here as if frozen — their once-playful dynamic and interaction has now turned static. The laughter, smiles, seduction, and flirtation of Eros, and the ruling and pretentious, truth-orientated convictions of Logos, are here turned to stone. This petrification happened because of our constant, tendency to look back to the past (exactly as in the Old Testament story), with our eternal hope of finding timeless values there. So we have here in this video a gorgeously bizarre, silent funeral of both beauty and wisdom. This aspect is also underlined by loud, prayer-like readings (from loudspeakers, in several languages), excerpts from the books of famous writers. They concern the topic of books and libraries, and also some subtleties that are associated with this territory. In contrast to the nostalgic fascination with the past in the videos, on the smaller screens that appear within the main screens (which show book shelves), one can see strange sequences of absurd sensuality, of delicate, but irrational and senseless, actions of the human body with objects or with itself. These actions, as I understand it, can be associated with two meanings: firstly, to give us a hint towards the entire necessity of catharsis and secondly, they try to warn us: we have to learn to touch the world in a particular, utterly new and refreshed way — that the world would not again be turned into a cosmos of empty signifiers. The beauty of signifiers is undeniable, but they are not nourishing, therefore they will never bring us to the "ultimate unknown" — into its full and all-absorbing realm.

These lines about the second as yet unfinished art piece are interpretations of visual images about which I heard more than I saw. But nevertheless they still had the power to create in my consciousness a strong and high quality reflective movement.

And what else is art at its best to suggest art to us?

Gia Edzgeradze is Georgian born Soviet Nonconformist artist now residing in Germany.

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HIDE & SEEK Drawings

In her video works, performances, drawings and installations, Fürnkäs confronts the unstoppable image production of the 21st century and investigates the visual spaces of our present through the use of chance and everyday practices. She uses language, drawing and gestures to transform the flood of images into media-reflexive actions via performative, installative and time-based techniques. Fürnkäs's *Hide & Seek* (#1-8), is a series of fictitious portraits that take their starting point in passport-photo-sized drawings of faces. Analogous to the latter, in *Hide & Seek* it is a coffee stain that has been worked on with ink and oil sticks in such a way that highly abstracted, partly expressive, partly subtle or ghostly-looking faces appear on the paper. The expression of Fürnkäs portrayed figures ranges from exalted, contemplative to opaque, yet - in contrast to digital images - they have a medially inscribed, vulnerable quality.

- Text by Eva Birkenstock

The fact that scenes from the Japanese horror film "Ringu" (1998) are probably among the most disturbing in film history may be due to the fact that they subtly revolve around our field of vision: Photographs in which individual faces are strangely blurred, mirrors that look back at us, faces hidden behind hair and, ultimately, portraits of people who come to life in unguarded moments. The face that you always look out of, but never get to directly see for yourself, is localised as the uncanny. And this in all the ambiguity of the word, which at the same time points to absolute strangeness, to that which seems furthest away, as well as to its opposite: namely, to a threatening state of being overly close. More specifically, it is the eyes, as the openings in the head through which inside and outside exchange. Like the title itself, wells, television sets etc. allude to this in the film. They are the holes into infinity, into the bottomless nothingness, into which something has fallen, that is hiding there and now threatens to come out again - we are equally responsible for both.

- Text by Gudrun Bott

See more drawings here:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9u0w60chmaegph8/AAAIU-mTmmDuxXolfU_LKv40a?dl=0

Exhibition list

Mouches Volantes (2022), Schloss Ringenberg Edition (2018), Osthaus Museum (2018), Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen (2017)

Hide & Seek, 2010-ongoing

Mixed media on paper, Japanese ink, coffee, oil sticks

29.7 x 42cm / 3.5 x 5.5cm (framed with plexiglas)

Photo by Moritz Krauth





Installation view
Metamorphoses of Control,
Mouches Volantes, Cologne (2022)



Jahresgaben 2017/2018,
Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen (2017)
Curated by Eva Birkenstock. (*Hide and Seek*, 2018, 29.7 x 42cm)



Hide & Seek, 2010-ongoing
Mixed media on paper, Japanese ink, coffee, oil sticks
3.5 x 5.5cm (framed with plexiglas)

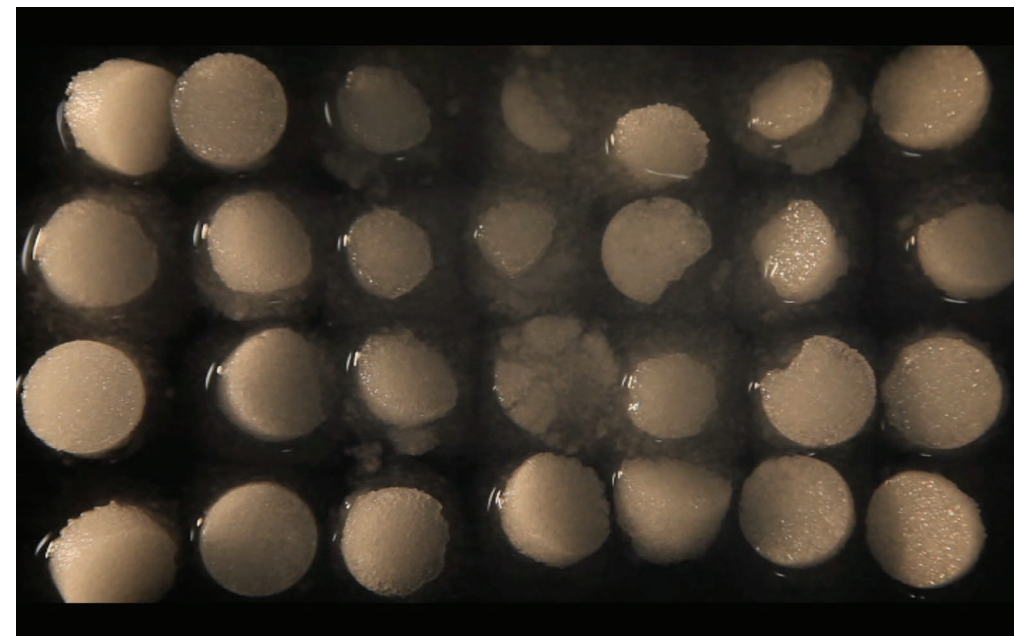
SUGAR MAKES YOU SAD

Video installation

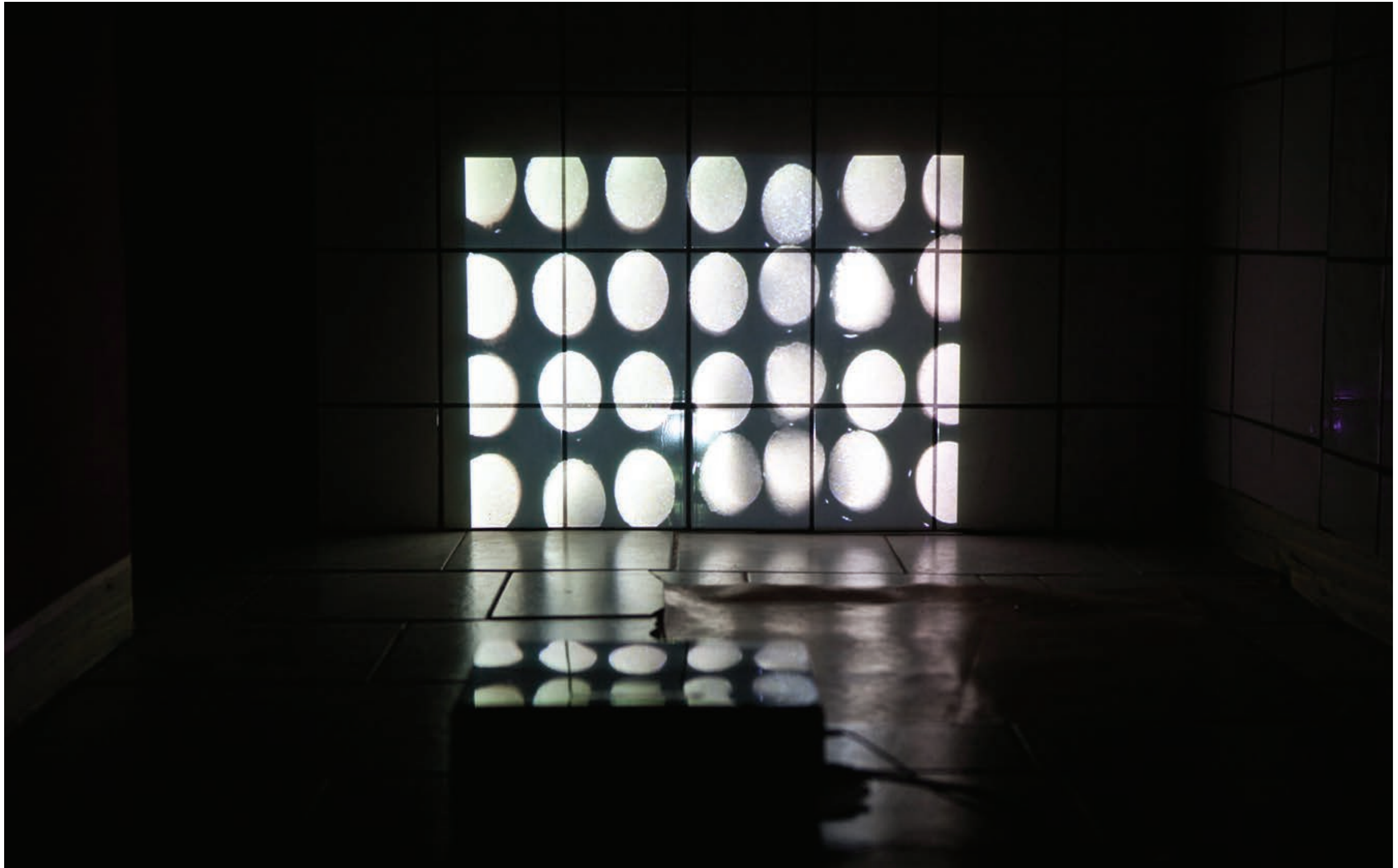
The exhibition brings together video works by a group of up-and-coming artists who use the moving image as a medium for their artistic practice and as the exhibition title suggests present an examination of the overarching theme of corporeality in their works.

The videos experiment with the individual experience of one's own body or the bodies of others, be it in a public, private or social context. The material composition of the body, its materiality and plasticity, are explored not only in the context of the moving image, where the body is presented as an artistic material, but also in view of the physical possibilities afforded by our physical presence as our very own projection surface. Parallel to this year's tour of the Düsseldorf Art Academy, the exhibition project, initiated by artists Melike Kara and Isabella Fürnkäs, offers an additional presentation and discussion platform to facilitate a dialog with young and contemporary video art.

- Text by Julia Stoschek Collection



Sugar Makes You Sad, 2013
 Video installation, projection, video 7min, color/no sound, loop
 Filmed with Marion Benoit
 Photo by Julia Stoschek Collection



Installation view
BODY LIGHT, Venus & Apoll,
Project space of Julia Stoschek Collection, Düsseldorf (2013)

Das Schimmern Dunkler Käferaugen

Text zur Ausstellung BODY LIGHT

Venus & Apoll, Julia Stoschek Collection, 2013

The exhibition Body Light positions itself within a series of exhibitions, seeking a curatorial solution for the legitimate display of video art. Through an inventive staging of what would often, feebly be described as Aura, the exhibition emancipates the viewer from the traditional con nes

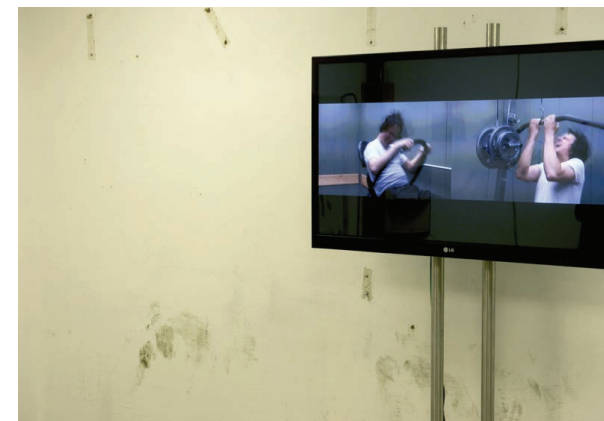
and offers an essential contribution to this ongoing project. Videos booths where the viewer is completely subjected to the temporality Im. Instead of negotiating an interaction between two independent and the work, the video booth simply forces a viewer to relinquish but imprisoned. He cannot relate to the Im in any way other than the This understandably evokes mixed feelings for the viewer: an ob- to appreciate the work in it's entirety, impatience, a sense of repres- disoriented feeling.

And as such, emancipation remains of fundamental interest to con- practice. I applied to her face, which was blurred in the twilight, the passionate dreams, but read in her eyes as they turned towards me nonentity - Proust. The duration of the Im is diametrically opposed

viewer's stay. Since the architecture of the video booth only allows the viewer to leave or stay, this opposition cannot be resolved. The cultural solution of this affect laden relations- hip, easily reduced to ght or ight, must allow the viewer to relate to Im from multiple perspectives.

In large scale video exhibitions like The Big Picture, this issue is often ignored. Rather the viewer simply nds in the architecture, yet another oversized, encapsulated video booth and the prob- lem becomes all the more evident. In the extravagantly designed basement vaults of Düsseldorf's K21, the lms are projected into individually designed rooms and the viewer always has the option to leave the room early and enter the next, where another video runs. But here as well, the viewer can only relate to the video through the duration of his stay. In these cavernous, ahistorical and implausibly shaped rooms, the absence of light deprives us any sense of perspective and thus any sense of subjecthood. Worse yet, should the viewer decide to leave, he has no other option than crossing abruptly into the adjacent booth where he is apprehended again by another Im and the process of desub- jecti cation proceeds exponentially. One can only break the cycle by leaving the exhibition altogether.

While, the exhibition Body Light also expands the projection screen to encompass the entire sur- face of the exhibition, it also takes place in a large, former hair salon whose rooms



are still out- tted or at least carry traces of their original use. Here, the viewer experiences the complete and necessary inversion of proust's trenchantly detailed scenario: our age is infected with a mania for showing things only in the environment that properly belongs to them, thereby suppressing the essential thing, the act of the mind which isolated them from that environment. A picture is no- wadays 'presented' in the midst of furniture, ornaments, hangings of the same period, a second- hand scheme of decoration in the composition of which in the houses of to-day excels that same hostess who but yesterday was so crassly ignorant, but now spends her time poring over records and in libraries; and among these the masterpiece at which we glance up from the table while we dine does not give us that exhilarating delight which we can expect from it only in a public gallery, which symbolises far better by its bareness, by the absence of all irritating detail, those innermost spaces into which the artist withdrew to create it. In contrast to the video booth, the individual rooms at Body Light offer their own temporality, namely their history. Whereas Im in the video booth, monopolizes time (it's no mer coincidence that it's the only light source) and reduces the room to a passive receptacle in which the dissipated temporality of the viewer - pure dura- tion - is forced into a dualistic relationship with the temporality of the Im, we nd in Body light a twofold dialectic between the visitor, the room and the Imic medium.

This dialectic is rstly the relationship between Im and room. Here, the inherent time of the Im confronts the historical time of the room. This becomes especially apparent given

that a multiplicity of rooms encounter a multiplicity of videos. It is this multipolar encounter which provides a sense of perspective and its significance. This opposition between film and space resolve into a clear synthesis. The structural similarity between film and installation is often discussed and it's hardly surprising that films shown as installations can grasp the temporality of a given space. The historically delineated hair salon confronts the hermetic temporality of the film and transforms it. Here the viewer experiences two modes of generated through action in space and the other inherent in temporality of film. Here, the second dialectic between viewer and film emerges. Though the respective projections remain the only source of light, in contrast to the video booth, the rooms in *Body Light* allow individual visitor, by way of his viewing position in such historically laden space, can be seen. Here, he need

ally relate in a real world to the film through the duration of his stay but must act in space altogether. He can not merely act between the surface but must also relate to them. For the last time, Proust's sub-observations: Our attention fills a room with objects but our

solve and creates room for ourselves. Observing the room is as much a component of our aesthetic experience as observing the film since it is hardly possible to observe the film without observing the room. The film essentially determines the atmosphere of the room and the room determines through its atmosphere - that is the consummate relationship of all present objects with each other - the perception of the film. The lack of distance between film and room that Benjamin sees as lacking in aura, is inverted here through the atmosphere of the objects in the room and a new distance created. The viewer can no longer be taken in by the film without the possibility of associative reflection (which is ultimately dialectical) since, in a room of real tangible objects, the attention of the viewer always jumps back and forth between object and film. In a video booth, the viewer's attention can at best oscillate between the film and the viewer's own consciousness. However, individual consciousness is not simply an instantaneous component of the aesthetic experience but rather the synthesis of aesthetic experience. When the initially contradicting film and space resolve into a synthesis the viewing experience becomes instantaneously unique and plural.



in which space is created by bodies moving in time is silhouetted with exceptional clarity against the backdrop of film's temporality.

A recent article on the blog, *Perisphere* attributes the exhibition a romantic tendency. The author concerns himself little with the exhibition architecture and much more with the individual works which are somewhat neglected here. He draws a parallel between the pronounced individualism of the present and that of the romantic epoch. But considering the exhibition as a whole, this hypothesis hardly holds. The perceptual realization of others and how they move through the distinct spaces of the exhibition, gives the individual a sense of how different the perceptions of each observer must be.

Here, the ideas of German Idealism are more relevant than those of Romanticism. What prevents excessive individuation, especially in the aesthetic field, is ultimately spoken and

ted architecture of and simultaneously temporality: one the abstract temporal and film emerges. of light, in contrast to the video booth, the rooms in *Body Light* allow individual visitor, by way of his viewing position in such historically laden space, can be seen. Here, he need

ally relate in a real world to the film through the duration of his stay but must act in space altogether. He can not merely act between the surface but must also relate to them. For the last time, Proust's sub-observations: Our attention fills a room with objects but our

Firstly, each film in the exhibition can only be experienced specifically as such since it has an inimitably specific relationship to the specific space. This hardly the case with the video booth given that the booth is interchangeable and the experience of the same film in different video booths tends to be identical. As the viewing experience becomes inimitable, the synthesis of film and space - not the film itself - could be described in Benjamin's words as auratic. This specific experience can only be had in this specific situation. In an exhibition like *Body Light*, the dialectic between film and space, which is altogether negated in the cinema and video booth, allows associative thought while watching the film rather than after. Secondly, the viewing experience is pluralized through the viewer's awareness of the perspectives of others and every viewer can relate to the film spatially and temporally - as freely as anyone else. The space in *body light* becomes as much a space for observing other visitors and their relationship to the projections. Here, the individual subjects become self aware by observing other subjects. The way

written language which mediates universal concepts and facilitates intersubjective understanding. Body Light anticipates the medium of language as a path from the individual to the general. By observing other visitors and their autonomous relationships to the individual rooms and films, the visitor experiences by way of body language and the behaviours of other visitors, something about their perspective and must conclude that theirs is different from his own. This however is a far cry from romantic escapism. Rather the exhibition instigates a far reaching discussion on corporeality. Again, the heterogeneous works experience synthesis in which they are all seen under the gaze of corporeality. And finally, each represents a partial articulation of the broad and often banalized theme of corporeality. In Body Light, this discussion undergoes a pertinent reappraisal. Unfortunately however, the significance of the body, particularly in aesthetics, is too great to be suitably addressed here.

Body Light occurs within a festive framework that brings Nietzsches words to mind: What good is all the art of our works of art if we lose that higher art, the art of festivals? Formerly, all works of art adorned the great festival road of humanity, to commemorate high and spirited moments. The mood of subdued anticipation on the opening night, the often erotic films in relation to multilayered architecture and the festive illumination of projected light make one think of the labyrinthine rooms of certain clubs, in which the german techno that gave an entire generation the prospect of unity is played. Though a festival in antiquity could still break class boundaries, the dialectical motor of the collective so to speak, Adorno brings the disillusionment of the late 20th century to the festival when he questions the agency of the festival in its time and sees it as an affect ridden repetition within a fixed structure or even as a caricature of said structure.

The Techno movement however let the true character of a raucous festivity shimmer once more and, regardless of what has become of techno today, one can recognize the universalizing character latent within the festival. Especially when, among other things, one considers that it was this music that united East and West Germany's youth after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The exhibition Body Light is a festival of the body, hardly in a hedonistic sense but rather a festival of the bodily presence of emancipated individuals. And this can be asserted specifically of an exhibition devoted to film, a medium often thought to deprive individuals of their autonomy and question the subjecthood of the viewer entirely. We'd like to invite the biggest of all idealists to comment when we quote his only serious poem devoted to his friend Hölderlin:

Um mich, in mir wohnt Ruhe, - der geschäft'gen Menschen
Nie müde Sorge schläft, sie geben Freiheit
Und Musse mir - Dank dir, du meine
Befreierin, o Nacht! ...

Also, in the artworks and the form of presentation the theme of night reoccurs but should not be misunderstood as mystically romantic. Night here, is rather the ultimate negative, the dark or the absolute unromantic. It is unbeing death. But it is only in the face of this absolute other that unification becomes possible. The artworks that actually embody alienation and individuation find their absolute other in the darkness of the exhibition. Here this other is the festive room of autonomous, animate bodies that enter into an exchange with each other and aspire towards a universally valid truth. What dancing bodies recognised by night can now be discussed by day.

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