

HANS-JÖRG MAYER

A Touch of Cthulu

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PRESS RELEASE

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"Zombies are often interpreted as consumption idiots. Zombies are those against whom those who can afford it erect walls behind which they entrench themselves. Because zombies act collectively, they ultimately overcome all obstacles. Through technical and genetic modifications, they continue to evolve into cyborgs and animal-human beings, a new species. At some point they set off into space." HJM

The culturally mediated boundaries between animal, human and machine have become more fluid in the age of genetic and information technology. Already in the 1980s, Donna Haraway founded a new, feminist, emancipatory myth of the "reinvention of nature" with her essay of the century, "Manifesto for Cyborgs", which appropriated the wonders of the techno and science avant-garde instead of rejecting them as male-dominated. The extremely creative output of futuristically staged aesthetics in film, fashion, literature, and music of the underground of the 1980s should also be seen in this context.

All this took place in a world that was still largely analogous. What was then still a lot of beautiful fantasy is now everyday life, just not so beautiful. As is well known, progress is unstoppable, but it has always disturbed people and frightened them, like everything that is different. Enthusiasm and defense exist parallel since the discovery of fire.

Hans-Jörg Mayer paints zombies that look like models, cyborg women with techno prostheses and perfectly dressed human-animal beings. And stones, possibly millions of years old, that look like stones. His repertoire naturally touches the aesthetic eccentricity of the 1980s, in which the beginning of his artistic work falls, but also the early feminist artistic world of Sci-Fi literature of the 1920s and 1950s. Not out of nostalgia, but in celebration of the emancipatory power of the different, which is rampant in these epochal niches and feeds the utopia of a non-anthropocentric world view.

Despite the unrestrained voluntary transplantation of technology into all areas of life, the fear that there is less and less human (life) and more and more machine (death) in the human being still reigns in a paralyzing way today. Life is sacred, death is amoral, just like nature. But it is not at all about morality, but about distribution. Being human is a privilege. Between life and death, life flourishes.

¹ Call of Cthulu is a story by H.P. Lovecraft from 1926. In his stories Lovecraft thematizes the insignificance of man in the face of an indifferent, infinite cosmos.